

# AFRICAN ODYSSEY

# AFRICAN ODYSSEY

*By*

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THE TRAVEL BOOK CLUB

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DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF  
THE GALLANT MEN WHO DIED  
WITH MAJOR WILSON IN HIS  
LAST STAND ON THE SHAANGANI  
RIVER



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## PART ONE

## CHAPTER ONE

THERE are no roads in all the world just like the highways and transport roads of old South Africa. On them one found romance, the joy of living, the risk of dying.

Those days in South Africa, days of transport-riding and trade, fighting or prospecting, had an appeal which has gone forever.

How I funked the start. Worried in case I had not bought the best. Was this or that as it should be? Was I really competent? Had I better chuck it after all? Well, my excuse is that I was not so very old—though I would have resented being told so, for I had the self-reliance of a man of fifty, but the fact is that I was only seventeen when I made my first trip as a trader.

I was taking with me as my assistant an old hand named Niven. He had been a good man in his day, none better until "Cape Smoke"—a vile rot-gut drink—had got him, but I knew that the old chap was one of the best in the country as a transport-rider or when it came to dealing with Zulus or Swazies. He spoke a dozen native lingoes like a native and there was little chance of his getting any "smoke" where we were going.

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The night before we set out I had seen that the boys

had greased every waggon wheel, overhauled each waggon from boom to waggon-tent, and that all supplies were properly packed so that when I gave the order "Trek yow," in the morning, all would be ready.

My loads were such as a general store for Zulus would have carried in those days, for though all natives have their likes and dislikes, the Swazies favoured almost the same things as the Zulus.

My trade goods were made up of gaudy blankets—these for wear and not for sleeping on—equally brilliant calico prints, knives—mostly of the long-bladed butcher variety—tobacco, snuff in large quantities, beads, hatchets, bangles, looking-glasses, mouth organs and notions.

For my boys I carried a large supply of salt and mealie flour and then there were my own special supplies such as coffee and dried vegetables, and my guns and ammunition.

Each of my waggons was drawn by a full span of salted oxen, oxen which had been inoculated and were immune against tsetse fly, whilst each of my spans consisted of eighteen, instead of the usual sixteen oxen. This was a thing which old man Niven had advised me to do and I did not regret it. Each span had a voorlooper or leader and a driver, these being "toties" from the Colony.

The inspanning of the oxen was a matter of careful drill, and like old cavalry horses, each well-trained oxoon knew his place and went to it. They would be driven up to the waggon and ranged in line by one of

the boys and kept there while at the same time Niven and myself—one at each waggon—would place a noosed reim made of raw-hide round the horns of each ox and in a few seconds the yoke was adjusted to each neck. All my beasts were veterans and knew their places. I had not spared money on my spans and had got Niven to help with the purchasing, for that old man would not let anyone beat him over animals.

The yoking was a simple process. There were two flat wooden pegs, called "skeys", which passed through each yoke on each side of the neck, the yoke itself was kept in place between the pairs of oxen by a twisted strip of raw-hide which passed underneath the neck of the beast and was then hitched in a deep nick in the "skey". The oxen when in motion pushed forward, and the yoke then rested against the hump on the withers.

The driver would now shout in a long-drawn wild yell, raising his voice to the pitch of a diabolical screech: "Trek yow, H-a-m-b-e—ke. T-r-e-k." Then as if in a terrific rage, cry to each ox a string of vile adjectives: "Englishman, Yow verdomde Boer—(damned Boer)" this with a cut of his long whip. "Scot-man, T-r-e-k." The ox who got the cut of the whip and the curse applied to it, would be named after someone against whom the driver had a grudge.

The long whip could be and was made to crack like the shots from a revolver fired as fast as the user could pull the trigger. Again and again would these reports crack out, and as each ox in the span took the strain,

the driver would run through his whole vocabulary of bad names and adjectives. Slowly but surely the enormous waggons would get under way, the great ponderous structures rolling and creaking as they did so. The pace, when loaded, would be an average of three miles an hour, providing the going was reasonably good; but often I have been glad to think that I have done three miles in a day.

It was delicious to camp at night under the African sky, to watch the boys' fires and listen to their singing; to hear the weird cry of some night bird or the noise made by some beast from the surrounding veldt. But there was another side. Here it is as I often found it.

Rain, rain, rain; the track or veldt now one huge mass of seemingly bottomless mud, both waggons stuck to the top of the wheel in the clinging mess. No sooner would I dig out one waggon—all hands being at the job—than in would go the other. Two spans would be yoked to each waggon and only then with the greatest effort would I get them on to a piece of firm ground.

I've gone through parts of the Pietersberg and Lydenberg districts and have not made a dozen miles in the same number of days. Then the cold. Not only have I been wet for a week on end and never had a dry stitch on me, but at night I've sat and shivered by the fire, colder than I've ever been in England in mid-winter.

I've seen snow a foot thick up in those mountains and more than once found one of my oxen dead from

the cold. That was another side to the life of a transport-rider. There was still a third. No rain for three or four months, and the veldt as bare and dry as a bone; your spans just crawl along, they are choking with dust and want of water and so are you. Mile after mile, week after week and month after month, and all you passed the whole time was red dust broken at times by the skeletons of oxen who had died and whose bones had been picked clean by the aasvogels.

Every water-hole or pan that you came to was dried up and surrounded by bones of all kinds of birds and animals. I would get so that I hated the bright blue sky, and the broiling sun, the red veldt and the sight of my poor devils of oxen with their tongues hanging out.

Transport-riding and trading was a great life but it was far from being all honey.

Our riding—and shooting—ponies were all salted Basutos, trippers or single footers and Boer-trained so that one could shoot from their backs. My weapons were two brand new Martini rifles and a fine double-barrelled gun which I had picked up second hand. One barrel was rifled, and the other was smooth-bore from which I usually fired buck shot.

The first few days out I found what a jewel I had in old Niven. His knowledge of the native mind was almost uncanny. Strange as it may seem to whites who do not know them, there is always a fashion among all natives from the Arctic to the Equator just as there is amongst all whites.

One lot of African natives will want their clothes of



a certain colour and will take nothing else, just the same as Mrs. Smith or Mrs. Jones; another tribe not a dozen miles distant will want the same cloth but of different colour or perhaps with two startling colours in it. It is just the same with beads. I carried all the most wanted colours, but there again certain tribes would have just one or two colours and nothing else would do. Zulus in those days strangely enough favoured either brilliant red or pitch black; they would take nothing else. Warriors and their women folk—old hags and young intombis—would haggle and haggle for hours on end; for half the beauty of a deal consisted—with them—in the endless haggling and bargaining over the trade.

They would be hard as the devil to make a deal with; up to every trick imaginable and think it only fair to beat you by any means in their power. With live stock they knew more tricks than the most crooked horse copper or gipsy dealer and would be proud as the devil if they could palm some broken-down beast on to me or Niven. But in honesty they were another proposition entirely. It was just a matter of how one looked at things.

I could leave my waggon for an hour or a week, with no one in charge, and come back and find one or twenty natives sitting around them waiting to do a trade, but not one of them would ever have thought of touching a thing in my absence. The high-grade Zulu especially—and most Swazies for that matter—were the most honest people in the world in such matters.

I would always be the first up—that is excepting

my fine old Zulu headman—and see that the boys were hustled out and fires got going. I had made myself thoroughly proficient with all that appertained to their jobs, so that no boy could show off by making me look a fool because I did not know his work and how to do it better than he did.

Several weeks had gone by and now the rays from the African sun beat down on us as from a great burning glass, the cliffs on either side of us shut out any breeze there might have been which would have tempered the fierceness of the intense tropical sun.

We came to the drift in the river for which we had been making and on the advice of old Niven I decided to outspan and make camp on the farther side. As the old chap said: "When a river is low enough to cross and the drift is in good shape, always get to the other side before you outspan. African rivers are not to be depended on for an hour."

The current here was swift and very strong; even though the water was fairly low it took all the oxen could do; twice the leading pair were swept off their feet but finally they emerged panting and almost exhausted on the far side. It was at times like this that I realized how little I still knew about handling oxen and how much I had to learn from a man like Niven.

No native voorlooper, no old 'Tottie driver, not even an old dopper Boer, could excel this old Englishman in handling a Scotch cart with eight mules or a waggon with two spans of oxen hitched to it. His trained eye took in instantly what had to be done, and

the best way in which to do it: what was more, every native was aware of the fact and acted accordingly.

The next morning a party of eight young Swazies—one of whom was mounted—came up to me as I was seated at the fire eating my breakfast. It happened that Niven had ridden away early to a kraal a few miles distant for something or other. The one who was mounted and evidently the leader or someone of rank, was a fine-looking fellow, not more than twenty-three or four as I judged, tall, straight, beautifully-built and proportioned and showing signs of great strength.

He was the only one of the party who showed any sign of rank in his ornaments. He had a broad band of leopard skin round his head and stuck in it was a splendid crane's feather. Over his shoulders he wore a leopard skin kaross and for a saddle cloth he had another.

All carried assegais, kerrie sticks and large war shields. Halting a few paces from me, this headman or leader gave the usual "Saku bona," then sliding off his horse he squatted on the grass while the others stood behind him.

It happened that I had my double-barrelled gun beside me which I was about to give a good cleaning. Staring at me rudely for a minute or so, he suddenly stretched out his hand saying:

"White man give me that gun. I want it."

Without moving or showing him how startled I was, I said to him as I put the gun behind me:

"Who are you, that you speak to me in that manner and have not the courtesy of even a Fingo?"

"Umkosona, the son of Loboya, the chief induna of the king," replied the young man, at the same time giving a haughty toss to his head, denoting annoyance with me for not knowing his identity.

Once more he said: "Give me that gun."

I was getting annoyed. Not so much with his demand—that was bad enough—but with the complete absence of the word 'nkose, in addressing me.

My use of the language was not good enough for me to say all that I wished, I could understand it much better than I could speak it. I did not want to have trouble with this son of a great chief, but at the same time did not intend to let him treat me as he was doing. Turning to my headman, who I knew was a man of some standing in his own tribe, I said:

"Tell this umfane that I am a chief and ask him when it has been the custom for his father to send him to be insolent to white men visiting his father's country on friendly trading trips?"

The barefaced insolence from this youngster still under the tutelage of indunas had got my back up.

The old headman, who knew all the innate courtesy of Zulus in dealing with white men of standing, did not mince words to this youngster.

"Umfane! When has a chief's son learnt to talk with the loud voice and insolent swagger of a Kafula (town boy of no tribe—an outcast). Have you come to trade with the Inkose—(giving me the full title of chief) or to make your father's name foolish in his eyes?"

"Wau, hark to the Kafula speaking to our chief," cried the others in tones of annoyance.

Springing to their feet they rattled their assegais against their shields in their anger, saying:

"Since when has the only son of our Mighty Chief, the Thunderer, had to listen to being spoken to like this by a Kafula dog?"

The young chief now mounted his horse and started away with his men. As he did so, he shouted out to me;

"When I return to my father I will tell him that a Kafula is in charge of the waggons and a white umfane who has reviled and abused his son."

I knew now that there would be trouble.

Two days later when we were in a particularly rough piece of country and having difficulty in pulling up a steep grade, the waggons were suddenly surrounded by fifty or more Swazies under the young chief.

Niven was on the seat of the back waggon, while I was riding close to the front one and had the gun across my saddle which had been the cause of all the trouble.

"Well, white umfane," the young devil said, "I have come for that gun; will you give it to me now to take to my father or must I take it and the waggons as well?"

I heard old Niven call out behind me: "Well, Umkosona! If your father the Great Loboya wants a gun, we will surely give him one, but wait a minute for I have a better one in the waggon than that which the 'nkose has in his hand."

Turning my head in surprise—for old Niven was

not the one to give way to insolent natives—I saw him disappear in the waggon tent but only for a minute, when he reappeared he had a double-barrelled gun in his hand, but now it was pointed at the young chief. There was a look on his face which all the natives recognized instantly as he threw the gun to his shoulder and said :

“Move a finger or a foot, you noisy, bragging umfane, and it will be your last. You will die and so will any of your men who makes the mistake of lifting his hand.”

“Cover them ——,” he called to me, “and shoot to kill.”

Every one of them stood as if rooted to the ground, for old Niven’s reputation was well known amongst them all. Umkosona knew very well that those barrels pointing at him had behind them the keenest eyes and the steadiest hands on all the border country and that Niven would not hesitate to kill.

“Wau,” cried all the Swazies, their eyes starting from their heads as they stared at the gun barrels, but making no attempt to move.

Again old Niven spoke and I felt that I could not stand the strain much longer.

“So the Swazies have become a race of common thieves and the son of the Great Chief is no better than a common ishingana (rascal), a brawling bully who thieves, rather than go to war and fight as his fathers did. A thief who boasts that his Great Father has sent him to thieve.”

The words, tone and the look of disdain that he gave

them all, seemed to make them wince, stinging them like a lash.

Speaking to me he said: "That lad is coming with us, —, keep him covered." Then to Umkosona and the induna with him he said:

"Get up in the waggon beside me. Tell your Kafulas that you are coming with me as far as the border and that if one move against us is made that you both die instantly."

I got the two of them in the first waggon and tied them up—much to their indignation—and then we started the waggons back towards the border. Those oxen were driven as they had never been before. Night and day either Niven or myself sat beside the two, ready to shoot them if we were molested, but now Umkosona was a very subdued youngster, and the old induna admitted to Niven that he would be in for a bad time with his father. Still, for all that, the night after I had crossed the border and released them as I had promised I was attacked.

I was riding about half a mile ahead of the waggons, when from some bushes which overhung a rivulet, ten natives came bounding towards me with assegais and shields. With deep, roaring shouts and ear-splitting whistles, they charged towards me.

I had my double-barrelled gun with me and, stopping my horse dead, I got the leading man with a bullet, dropping him in his tracks. I then let go with my smooth bore which was loaded with buck shot, and this brought down two more.

As I started to reload as rapidly as possible, a double

crash of firearms rang out and two more of the natives fell. It was old man Niven and my head-boy who had arrived by chance in the nick of time. The others now started to beat a rapid retreat; having reloaded I again fired at them, wounding two, who dropped and then started off again.



## CHAPTER TWO

AFTER a fairly protracted but successful trip, Niven left me. He had taught me a lot about native trading and my knowledge of the various dialects had improved greatly so that I felt able to carry on alone. I pushed further and further up-country, getting rid of my waggons and oxen as I went, and engaging porters to take their place. Finally I turned back towards civilization.

At this time I was way up in the high bush veldt in Portuguese territory and about half-way between Delgoa Bay and Koomati Poort. I was making for the Transvaal, and had with me about forty porters. I had been trading successfully with some of the smaller tribes and had secured not only a fair amount of ivory but quite a substantial amount of gold dust which I had got from the natives.

The spot at which what I am about to relate occurred, was just south of a branch of the Limpopo. I had had a hard trip and a good deal of fever had taken my men down at different times.

I was about to go through some territory ruled by a chief of whom I had heard some peculiar tales. He and all his tribe were accused of abatagati—witchcraft—and worse. After crossing the stream I struck inland

towards a high range of mountains which seemed to end abruptly in one great towering peak. It was here that the chief Igazipuza ruled over a small piece of mountainous territory. He had the reputation of being the cruellest devil in all that part of Africa and was believed to have murdered by treachery a whole party of Englishmen some ten years previously.

A high mountain marked Igazipuza's country, and I reached its foothills within five days from the time I had first sighted it.

At the spot where I made my camp was one of the very finest bits of country in all South Africa. The spur on which I was, ran at right angles to the rest of the range, which stretched its mighty length east and west as far as the eye could see, with a vast and beautiful park land of thousands of acres at its foot.

Then in the distance, sloping gently away from the hills, was the great forest, with trees so lofty that birds on their top branches were out of range of my shot-gun.

I have seen many forests, but never any more remarkable in appearance than these mighty trees festooned from top to bottom with trailing vines and dark-hued mosses gently stirring in the winds.

The next day I should be at the kraal of Igazipuza for, in spite of his reputation, I meant to visit him, as it was reported that he had great quantities of gold and I wanted some of it. I had more than half my men well armed, and they were the sort I could depend on at a pinch; they had showed that more than once during the trip.

Breaking camp early the next morning I found

myself and my caravan surrounded by at least a thousand natives in full war regalia. It was my first sight of the Matabele. They were a long, long way from their country but were on a "stamping out" expedition. Igazipuza had incurred the displeasure of the Great Black Elephant Lobengula, and this impi was to stamp him out together with all his people.

I did not come up until towards the end of the fight. The Matabele Induna had broken the back of the defence and was now about to make his final attack. His men presented a ghastly sight, covered with dust and sweat, at least two-thirds of them gashed and dripping with blood, shields hacked and assegais splintered, panting with the exertion of the charge and fight, there was none of the spick and span parade appearance which they had presented the first time I had seen them.

Now every man had a mad light in his eyes, and low murmurs issued from their lips, almost like the low, rumbling growls of a lion. Here a man might be seen passing his fingers gently over the edge of his broad stabbing spear which was still foul and clotted with blood; there another could be seen explaining to a friend how he had killed his adversary. One man I saw—a ringed man or keshla man—with a gash which had cut through his head ring, cutting part of it away, and with it had taken his ear and part of his cheek.

On every face there was a grim, revengeful rigidity, which boded no good for the remainder of the men of

Igazipuza. They would be "stamped out" without any doubt. Having tasted the delights of battle, the Matabele were now burning once more for the mad shock of conflict, the slashing with bangwaan, the smashing blow of kerrie stick and the thrill of the stomach-ripping, upward thrust with stabbing spear, to the accompaniment of the hissing "'sgee, 'sgee."

Lying in a small hollow and shut in by the high ironstone cliffs, was a small kraal, and it was here that Igazipuza had decided to make his last stand.

I was mad with excitement at what I had seen and what I expected to see. Here was the real Zulu—Matabele were almost pure Zulu stock in those days—at work as he had been since the days of the Great Tchaka.

All that remained of Igazipuza's warriors with their women and children, cattle and goods, had been sent to this last stronghold and there was no doubt that they had resolved to fight to the death. Where they had their stronghold it would be impossible to surround them, and I could see that the Matabele would pay and pay dearly before the "stamping out" took place. Still they knew what the option was. Return to Lobengula and say that they had failed and every man would be given to the executioners immediately.

They had to attack a cul-de-sac and this would only be taken when they had forced the enemy back step by step—forced them until their backs were against the face of the cliffs and they could not retreat another step.

Now I was put in a ticklish predicament. As I

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have already said all my men were more or less armed—half of them with guns of a decent sort for those days—and the King's Induna now asked me to help him in the assault. I pondered what to answer to get out of it, then the Induna like a sportsman, seeing my hesitation said:

"Au, 'mlungu all is well. Perhaps the Great, Great One would not like my having assistance in stamping out these wizards. We lion cubs can pull down our own prey."

A shouted order from him and the remainder of his impi swept up the slope in a perfect line of battle, as regular and as unbroken as that of any first-class line regiment. There came clearly to my ears their war chant as they advanced at a fast run. This was thrown back by the high cliffs as it swelled to a clamorous threatening roar of hatred and rage.

"Usutu, 'sutu, 'sutu."

The war cry of the charging Matabele was answered by the defending warriors, as the dark, unswerving line charged; white and black shields and assegais held on high, plumes tossing and the sparkle of the sun shining on the assegai heads.

The impact came with a clash and a shout from both sides; then silence in which I could plainly hear the shuffling of hundreds of feet, the crash of shields as they warded off blows, the thud of blows on human flesh and the gasp of the slain as they fell from the slashing blows of the assaulting warriors.

This went on for what seemed to me to be hours, but could not have really been more than ten or fifteen

minutes at the most. The numbers of the defenders had dwindled down to a few groups who were fighting desperately and selling their lives dearly.

"Kiss my assegai, dog, and taste death," shouted the Matabele Induna as he sprang at the Chief of the defenders. Whirling his battle axe in the air, he smashed it down on the head of Igazipuza and broke it as if it had been egg-shell. With a final roar of "'sutu, 'sutu," the Matabele swept over the groups and actually stamped out all resistance. Sheer weight of numbers and marvellous bravery had done the work.

The small kloof was a ghastly sight. In staring heaps the warriors lay, their splintered and broken weapons alongside of them or still grasped in their dead hands. Some still rolling about in their death agonies, clasping their assegais and stabbing them into the ground. Bodies lay in piles, gashed, hacked and the blood streaming from them. Dead and dying mixed up together.

Grimly, gallantly, to the very death, had Igazipuza's tribe fought and dearly had the Matabele paid for their success. The Induna I found out had been killed and so had the second in command. More than half of the impi were killed and of those remaining less than one third were without wounds.

Then came the horrible part, the killing of the wounded and all the old men and women. The old hags screamed and yelled as they were taken away to the executioners, whilst all the young—intombis and umfanes—(young women and boys) were marshalled

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to be marched away as slaves to the Matabele. To speak truly, most of the youngsters were soon resigned to their fate, they would have done far worse to the Matabele had they been the conquerors.

The Matabele warrior who had now assumed the command gave an order that the kraal should be fired and a dozen or more warriors sprang to obey the order with shouts of joy, and in a few minutes flames were bursting from several parts of the kraal as the straw huts had torches applied to them. The warriors having no more human beings to kill amused themselves with throwing their assegais at the dogs as they burst out from the different huts. The slaughter was over, the stronghold taken, and now what was left of the impi broke out into a chant of victory as they marched off, but first *they killed off all their own men who were too badly hurt to march with them.*

Such was a "stamping out" as I saw it, and the last act of the Matabele showed the iron discipline under which they were brought up and trained.

## CHAPTER THREE

**I**N the early days of Kimberley and in Matabeleland I often met Cecil Rhodes and the famous Dr. Jim—Leander Starr Jameson—to give the grand little Scotch doctor his full name. Then I ran across such men as Rudd up in Matabeleland; also Maguire, the Joels and the famous Barney Barnato—made a millionaire by the keen brain of Cecil Rhodes.

Cecil Rhodes, as I remember him in those far-off days, before he became famous and wealthy, was a lank, loose-limbed, carelessly-dressed youngster with a very large head. He was not the popular idol then that he became later on in life. In those first days he was just a little too much of the Oxford man; this he rubbed off later on. His fine brother, Colonel Frank, was a man whom one and all worshipped, and Colonel Frank would obey the slightest nod from Cecil.

Dr. Jim was liked by everyone in Kimberley. He was always ready for a joke or fun, and he would attend any poor devil free, at any time of the day or night.

Another man of his kidney was dear old Hocking of the Goldfields Hotel, Jo'burg, who would let any old-timer down on his luck stay at his hotel for weeks and never ask for a penny. It was the only hotel I ever knew, where all the rooms opened out on the streets,



and where unless a man went to the office and asked for a bill, one was never presented. Yet Hocking made money and lots of it. Any old-timer reading this will remember that jolly, kindly, good-hearted old chap and his ready smile.

Hocking's name and the large dining-room bring to mind men now passed away; Jack Brabant, Dartnell, and Tom Wood, Worsley, Jim Denys and Willoughby; this last was a typical adventurer and afterwards became a general in the army of the Queen of Madagascar when she was fighting against the French. Owens was another of the same type, of whom hundreds of tales were told and most of them of the hair-raising variety. Tom Parker and his son Jack were another couple with whom I was friends. Jack and I shared rooms in Van Brander's Square overlooking the Wanderers' Club.

In the many conversations which I had with Rhodes, in Kimberley and on trek, he always showed that he had a very poor opinion of Imperial officers—with one exception—Goold Adams. It may be remembered that Rhodes in his will left a clause that any of his heirs adopting the profession of arms would be debarred.

Of Goold Adams though, Rhodes thought more than he did of many men and I have several times heard him make disparaging remarks about army officers, then suddenly realizing that Goold Adams was present, turn it off by remarking that his brothers were in the army.

One of the most spectacular figures in South Africa

at this time—after Rhodes—was little Alfred Beit of Wernher Beit & Co. His brain was one of the keenest in Africa, and in conjunction with his partner, Julius Wernher, they were a pair who were hard to beat.

Alfred Beit was not only keen, clever and shrewd; he had the most remarkable foresight allied to boldness in action. Beit would take what his partner called risks, but through Beit's wonderful insight and power of sizing up conditions these risks were really certainties, and invariably earned his firm huge profit.

Rhodes always admitted—most generously—that the great diamond amalgamation—called De Beers—could never have been made without the aid of Alfred Beit. Beit once made me an offer to take up a responsible position for him with a company of his called the Rand Estates; when I thanked him and refused he said to me:

“Stop all your roaming. You are missing thousands of splendid opportunities. You will regret it in after years if you do not settle down now.”

Another prominent man whom I knew in the early Johannesburg days was Hermann Eckstein. He was the first man to be elected President of the Johannesburg Chamber of Mines. Old-timers will remember the Eckstein Building near the “Chains”. He was a kindly, keen and clever financier; always doing a good turn on the quiet to someone who was down on his luck. He died a comparatively young man.

At one time and another I met every one of the Matabele or Rhodesian pioneers and I think that the finest of all was Matabele Thompson. This man's life

would provide enough material for a dozen books of adventure. He was a man for whom I had the greatest admiration. Brave to a fault, honest and kindly to all; King Lobengula trusted him more than he did any other white and I always think that the King's confidence was not misplaced.

Matabele Thompson was not a miner—or digger—as has been stated by many writers. In the Colony he had held several important positions in the Civil Service and was greatly respected by Chief Justice Villiers. This man had more to do with the forming of the Chartered Company than anyone, except Rhodes himself. He was implicitly trusted by Rhodes and risked his life daily for many months on end in the service of Rhodes. Yet this splendid man who had fought, traded, hunted and travelled all over South Africa when the country was ruled by savage kings like Lobengula, died peacefully in his bed about 1927 or 1928. His only son, a lieutenant in the 21st Lancers, was killed in the Great War.

No picture of Kimberley of those days would be complete without reference to the Illicit Diamond Buyers—known as I.D.B.'s—who grew to be one of the greatest scourges and pests the diamond fields ever knew. The native boys were wonders at procuring illicit diamonds. When working below ground or breaking the blue clay on the surface, directly they saw a stone they would cover it with their feet, pick it up between their toes, which they could use almost as easily as we can our fingers, and immediately the white overseer turned his back they would swallow it.

The only way the company had of getting stones back was by purging the boys.

When the compound system was introduced a lot of this was stopped but not more than fifty per cent. I remember that once I went with a couple of diamond detectives on a hunt to catch a certain I.D.B. This particular night we had one of the storms for which South Africa is so noted: lightning which was terrific and thunder claps which almost split my ear drums.

We finally reached the house of the buyer who had been reported to the police by a native decoy, rushed in and caught him in the act of counting and gloating over a bag containing two hundred and four stones of various sizes from seed diamonds to larger stones of from one to ten carats.

A blinding flash of lightning came, followed by a short sharp crack of thunder, almost exactly like a revolver shot. That thunder clap was the death warrant of the I.D.B. One of the detectives had a revolver in his hand; thinking that the I.D.B. had fired, this man pulled his gun on the buyer and shot him dead.

Another time I went on a raid with some of the Diamond Field Light Horse under the command of Captain Madoc (he died in the year 1935 as Colonel Madoc, Chief Constable of the Isle of Man) to a large house on the outskirts of Beaconsfield, a suburb of Kimberley.

This house was occupied by three Yankees and an Australian. A boy sentry of theirs gave them warning of our approach and they opened fire on us, killing

two, one of whom was a man riding directly behind me.

We eventually got into the house, killing three of the defenders first, and found illicit diamonds to the value of £28,000.

Terrible practices were rife in the Transvaal in those days. Drink of the vilest sort was a scourge and the Government not only did nothing to curb this but actually encouraged it.

Over the week-ends, the drunken orgies amongst the natives employed at the mines, were indescribable. This was bad enough, but eventually waggons or Scotch carts would go around selling the vile stuff to the natives in the kraals many miles from the large towns.

When trekking through the back veldt I saw numerous instances of what this traffic was answerable for amongst the natives.

One afternoon I had outspanned my waggons near a large kraal in the Lydecoenburg district. In front of the chief's hut, more than two hundred of his warriors mad drunk, were dancing round a poor brute of a native who was crawling round on his hands and knees. He had large lumps of flesh hanging from his face; these were his cheeks, his lips, his nose, and the whole of the flesh cut from his forehead so that the flap hung over where his eyes had been. Round him were dancing dozens of the drunken fiends with lighted torches which they pressed against his back, buttocks and thighs. He had been guilty of attempting

to steal some of the chief's drink. When I left in the morning he was still alive. Poor brute.

In Sekokoni's country in the Northern Transvaal, I had been outspanned for several days at a chief's kraal when some of his warriors returned from a raid and amongst the captured—brought back as slaves—were six nice-looking intombis, or young, unmarried girls, with fine, upright figures. These poor girls looked a bit downhearted, but to be slaves would not be so bad for those who might be chosen for the chief's harem.

Now previous to their arrival, this chief had been on one gigantic drunk for several days and was almost a maniac. His councillors and headmen were in almost as bad a state; unluckily for one of these—an old man with nearly white hair—he staggered against the chief in his drunken efforts to move around. I was not a yard from the chief at the time. He immediately ordered the poor old wretch to be stoned to death. In a few minutes more than fifty umfanes were pelting the old man with stones, until his body lay still and twitched and twisted no more.

Had I made the slightest effort to interfere it would not only have been useless, but have meant my death also, and perhaps that of all my men as well.

This act had excited the blood-thirsty passions of the devil and, looking round, he spotted the six girls. He now ordered them to be whipped round and round the open space in front of where he was sitting; finally ordering them to be ~~sent to the "bras"~~ to kill. The

poor girls had been whipped by sjamboks until they were a mass of blood, and now fifty youngsters ranging in age from twelve to twenty rushed in and with their hands and teeth actually tore those girls to pieces. Such is our dear black brother in his state of innocence.

It was not far north of this chief's district that I ran across a white man—by skin only—who should have been shot a dozen times. He made his living by buying very young intombis of from eight to fourteen. When he had a band of twenty or twenty-five he would take them to some of the larger towns and sell them to bigger scoundrels than himself. There was always a ready market for such goods. He had a harem of his own in which there were fourteen native girls and *two white women, with both of whom he had gone through a form of marriage.*

The strangest thing about the whole affair was that these two women showed every trace of having possessed great beauty at one time. One had six children and the other had nine, but three of the children belonging to each woman were black as the ace of spades.

## CHAPTER FOUR

TO understand who and what the Matabele were, and their power in the days of King Lobengula, one must remember that less than one hundred years ago, British South Africa consisted of only Cape Town and a very small belt of country to the north and east of it.

All the hinterland was the land of different warlike tribes, where might was right; where only brute force ruled and where the only occupations were war, plunder and slave raiding. In those days the outlying settlers were all the time engaged in defending themselves or their flocks and herds from raiding warriors, and a very small settlement had been started at a place where the fine city of Durban now stands.

These settlers found this part of the African continent ravaged and almost depopulated by a great and warlike nation which had recently been formed—the Zulus—and who owed their wonderful military power and organization to their great chief Tchaka, called by many the Black Napoleon.

This man early in life had been a petty chief of a small but warlike and manly tribe, which he had used to make himself the despot of all the surrounding peoples—that is of those whom he allowed to live. In



his own tribe and amongst the peoples he had conquered his word was absolute law and death followed instantly, often by terrible torture, for those who disobeyed him.

His impis, armed with throwing and stabbing spears, called assegais, made his name feared for hundreds of miles in all directions and the raids of his powerful impis or regiments always followed the same routine. Capture of all the cattle of the tribe which they had raided, the enslavement of the young men and women, and the utter extermination of the rest of the tribe. Tchaka became the greatest power South Africa had known for many hundreds of years.

When the first settlers landed at Durban trouble had begun among his people. Treachery was abroad, the blows came from his own family and from his chiefs or indunas. The greatest of these and the one in whom he placed the most implicit confidence was his great general or chief staff officer, a man named Mose-li-katze, his name meaning "the path over which blood is spread". This man's father had been a man named Matshobane who had been killed by Tchaka. Mose-li-katze never forgot this. About the year 1825-27 Mose-li-katze at the head of all his impis—estimated then to have been fifteen thousand—broke away from the Zulu nation; fled north with all his cattle, women and children, killing everything in his path so as to hamper pursuit.

Marching into Mashonaland and to the North of it he founded the Matabele nation, and now there started in that part of Africa the same rule which had

held for so long in Zululand and its bordering countries.

Mose-li-katze, as seen and described by the missionary Moffat, was, in the prime of life, one of the finest specimens of manhood one could wish to see. His skin was a reddish colour, not black, and his great muscles standing out from his body like cords, made him appear like a splendid statue of bronze. His face, however, according to the missionary, was foxy and cunning. Cruelty was written all over it; he had the savage look of a bird of prey.

On Mose-li-katze's flight northward he ran across a number of Boers on the trek, under the leadership of Andreas Liebenburg (the writer was well acquainted with this man's great grandson at Krugersdorp). These at once laagered and a bitter fight ensued. The fleeing Zulus were beaten off but the Boers lost more than half their number, including two waggons which had not been able to get into the laager in time.

Strangely enough the capture of these two waggons with their occupants, had a great effect on the life of King Lobengula. Mose-li-katze took one of these waggons with him, using it to carry his inkosi-kazi or chief wife, her son 'Nkulu-mana and some of his store of ivory. For some inscrutable reason of providence the Zulu chieftain allowed two of the young Dutch girls with the waggons to live, though one of them soon died from hardship. The youngest, named Sarah, lived and was the means—or so Lobengula always said—of saving his life.

The inkosi-kazi of Mose-li-katze travelled in the

waggon, but all the other wives had to tramp, and on that long waterless trek many a warrior—let alone woman—dropped out from thirst. One day the white girl Sarah came across a woman lying on the veld dying with a baby clasped to her breast. This was one of the wives of the chief. Near her was another of her children, a small boy of about seven. One warrior as he passed remarked: "It is the Fingo wife of the King; well, the aasvogels will soon pick them."

This Dutch girl shouldered the baby and leading the boy by the hand got them to camp that night and tended them for days. It was Lobengula and his sister, afterwards known to all the whites as 'ningi. Both Sarah and 'ningi were to be the greatest influences of Lobengula's life. Though only children of Mose-li-katze by a Fingo woman, both Lobengula and his sister were legitimate for their mother was not a concubine, but had been lobolo'd for (married) in regular manner by their father. The fact that Mose-li-katze had paid lobolo for his mother was an important thing for Lobengula when it came to the matter of succeeding his father.

Years later Mose-li-katze went on one of his great raiding and stamping out expeditions. He took three impis with him on this raid—roughly 3,500 men. Months went by and no word came of the King, then rumours of disaster were spread and finally certain indunas decided to declare the King dead and put his son 'Nkulu-mana on the throne. This youngster was at the time only about nineteen years of age, but this

suited very well his domineering mother Umhloaka, who was largely at the back of the whole plan.

Mose-li-katze returned the day before the ceremony of installing 'Nkulu-mana as King was to take place.

Craftily he had sent runners ahead to spy out how things were at his royal kraal. On his arrival he had all the actors in the plot rounded up. Most of the indunas implicated were at once handed over to the executioners, some of the minor chiefs were given to the ants (spread out near ant heaps and left for the ants to eat) the inkosi-kazi was thrown to the sacred crocodiles and the two sons—'Nkulu-mana and his young brother—were both stamped out.

Several years before this, Sarah and her protégé, Lobengula, had fled from the kraal and she had sought and received protection from a small tribe noted for their witchcraft. Here Lobengula had been brought up without the knowledge of his father, who now prided himself that he now had no offspring to plot against him. But the whereabouts of these two was known to his chief induna, a man named Umnombata.

As Mose-li-katze got older this induna, a loyal and true man, told the old King the facts and persuaded him to allow Lobengula to return to the kraal. Then the old King died and was buried in due state and ceremony in accordance with Zulu ritual.

A great cave was sought for and found, the corpse of the old King was bent in sitting fashion with his arms clasped round his knees, in this position it was sewn into two hides skinned from newly-killed oxen and then placed in the cave. All the necessary mystic

rites were performed by the witch-doctors. Next the cave had placed in it sixteen of the royal black oxen; these were killed but they would be ready for him in the next world. All his arms, trappings, war head-dresses, karosses and drinking vessels—these last being filled with twala—were put close to the body; then, after the mouth of the cave had been closed, the whole nation feasted and made merry celebrating the new King on the throne—quite like London.

Lobengula was shown to the people as the new King by Umnombata—the prime minister—and 'Ngwali the chief witch-doctor—the archbishop—and vouchsafed for as being the rightful heir. Lobengula was accepted by the nation and ruled as King—but for many years he was himself ruled by those two who had put him on the throne, who wanted to be the real rulers of the land.

Lobengula, however, meant to break the power of the priests, and waited his time until they had made themselves hated throughout the country, when he sprung his trap and they were stamped flat.

King Lobengula, I thought, had a great natural intelligence, which I always found to be far above that of any of the Bantu race with whom I had had dealings. I might say that it was greater than that of most of the whites with whom he came in contact. Human feelings such as we know them, he most certainly had not, and I saw him give orders for many diabolical things to be done; still even these were only such as the whole Matabele nation approved of and gloried in. Here is one which I saw.

An impi had returned from a raid and amongst the captured were several of the leading men and chiefs of the tribe. Lobengula was holding a kind of review of the victorious impi at the base of a huge kopje, a great rock towering up a good hundred feet. For what I am about to describe it is necessary for me to say that most kopjes slope gently up on one side and on the other there is usually a straight drop.

The serried ranks of the 'Mnyama impi—the black shields—stretched in two great horns with the main body concentrated in the centre. These all faced the straight front of the frowning kopje. In the exact centre of this crescent sat Lobengula with his principal indunas and old councillors. These corresponded to the heads of War Office, Home Secretary and such like. The common herd were well at the back of the impi.

The review over, several men had been called up who had distinguished themselves and these had been allowed to show off and recount their deeds. Two had been given awards of cattle by the King—kind of D.C.M.'s—and now all were watching the top of the kopje intently. This puzzled me for I could not see anything of interest yet dared not break the silence to ask the only white man there besides myself—Matabele Thompson—what was going to take place.

Suddenly on its flat top I saw some warriors with bound prisoners; these were brought to the edge of the kopje and held there. Now a procession advanced towards the King and his entourage. First came the two court clowns, making all kinds of foolish antics.

Then followed the King's Herald who did the bongaing or proclaiming of the King's many titles. "Eater up of Men, Great Black Elephant, Mighty Lion, Thunderer of the Earth!" and dozens of other such extravagant names.

Next followed a string of comely and naked intombis (unmarried girls) bearing platters on which were huge chunks of hot and half raw beef, others carried great calabashes of twala or native beer. This was for the entertainment of the King, his councillors and head indunas—izindunas. Last of all came the commanders of the impis which were at that time doing garrison duty around the Royal Kraal. These were in full war dress and looked superb as they saluted the King. Then an izinduna marched out into the centre of the field and raised his assegai in the air. Instantly from every soldier on the parade ground rang out the sonorous roar of the Royal Salute: "Bayete, Bayete."

I saw Lobengula give some slight signal with his hand, almost imperceptible. Instantly there was action on the top of the kopje. Seizing one of the bound men the executioners flung him out from the edge of the cliff and he came hurtling through the air to land with a thud on the rocks below, not many yards from where the King sat. Now every head was craned forward and many a "Wau" or "Yebo" of approval came from those nearby.

Then another dull thud and another poor devil hit the ground and this went on until fifty in all had been thrown over. Most never moved again; they

wanting young women and drinking brandy. I trust them."

That was what made Lobengula, in my idea, stand out head and shoulders above all the Bantu Kings of that time; he looked ahead and weighed things up as far as his knowledge would permit him. He saw that the future would hold many unexpected surprises for his race and nation. His high intelligence made him fearful of all who asked things of him which struck him as unusual or as something for which he could not see the reason.

The two best friends that King Lobengula had—and I met both of them many times and admired them—were Matabele Thompson, the very finest type of pioneer, and that equally remarkable man Colenbrander, who travelled with his wife, who was as fearless as he was. She spoke the Matabele language fluently and more than once gave the King a piece of her mind.

I always believed that these two men advised King Lobengula for the best, but the finding of gold altered all things, as it always does.

My first sight of the King was at an indaba just after he had reviewed his Royal impi—his Guard Regiment—the Imbesu.

He was tall as are all Zulus. He was not only of pure Zulu stock but of the highest and best blood in the land. He stood six foot three inches, but like all athletes who suddenly stop exercise, he had put on a lot of flesh and looked slightly flabby. He wore the usual mutya and had a magnificent kaross of leopard skin



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over his shoulders. His skin was a fine light bronze in colour and everything about him was immaculately clean as is the way with all Zulus of good stock.

He had a majestic manner and a really regal air.

I found during my stay that he not only had a Royal manner but a Royal sense of hospitality. I have had considerable dealings since those days with Presidents and Sultans, but this Matabele King was the pick in many ways.

When one thinks of the Matabele War, forced on the King by his people, and the later so-called Matabele Rebellion, one has to remember that Lobengula commanded a warrior race who had been brought up on warlike discipline and incessant fighting. This meant that he had a hard time restraining his people, when the whites over-ran his land. To nearly every decent white man who went into his country he was hospitable and friendly, but in the end he got a very poor deal.

As I shall show later, the "Mighty Black Elephant; He-whose-Name-Must-Not-be-Spoken" died a fugitive, almost alone, tricked and despoiled to the very end. He had not a white man's standards and many of his actions, to us, were horrible, but according to his own standards he only acted as he thought was right. He was a man with many fine qualities, and I for one am grateful to him for his kindness to me when I was only a youngster.

## CHAPTER FIVE

THE Izaunsi, witch-doctors, priests, archbishops, call them what you will, were the curse of the Matabele, and of Lobengula, as they had been of Tchaka and the Zulu nation.

These devilish wizards—and in some respects their powers were remarkable—were always at the King's elbow and it was this brotherhood who did the "smelling-out" of witches. Lobengula had to pander to them, and could only use them at their own price.

No man, not even the highest in the land, was ever free from the fear of being "smelt-out" and no induna councillor or member of the King's family dare offend these crafty, bloodthirsty devils. To do so meant that at the next "smelling" he or she would be accused of sorcery or witchcraft against the King.

At a great "smelling-out" several impis would parade in the centre of the great Royal Kraal. The King would be seated with his principal wives and councillors around him and the great indunas would be at the head of their impis, if the truth be known, trembling at the thought of what might occur.

Now the chief Izaunsi would come dancing into the centre with half a dozen of his assistants. Round and round the impis he would go, shouting out that he

smelt vile magic and sorcery, peering into the face of first one man and then another. Suddenly he would stop at some man, who, it had been arranged beforehand, should be smelt-out, and this man would be touched by the wand of the witch-doctor. Instantly he would be seized by those on either side of him and held until the chief executioner came up and plunged his great bangwaan into his chest or smashed him over the head with his kerrie stick.

Perhaps an induna had got too rich and owned too many head of cattle; another might be feared for his growing popularity; another might have refused the blackmail which the head Izaunsi had levied on him. A hundred and one things could be the cause of a man being "smelt-out" and given over to the executioners. This meant not only his death but the death of all his wives and children.

At what was known as the Great Dance—really great smelling-out—the witch-doctors had a free hand and it was not unusual for as many as two hundred to be slaughtered that night.

I knew of one instance where a fine old induna was smelt-out and killed. Then a large band was sent to his kraal; every man, woman and child was killed and his animals were taken by the witch-doctors.

One instance will show what power these damned priests had even over the Royal Family.

If there was one person who King Lobengula really loved, as we understand love, it was his sister, 'Ningi. She was a good woman in all that the word implies and very, very friendly to all the whites. Many and many

a great man she had saved from being "smelt-out" by the Izaunsi and they did not forget this nor forgive.

Time after time when things went wrong they would hint that someone very near the Great, Great One was the cause, that sorcery was being used by "One-whose-name-must-not-be-used," and so on.

King Lobengula had many children, but not a son by his inkosi-kazi or chief wife. At last she was with child and everyone went about in fear and trembling in case anything should happen. It did. The baby was born, it was a boy and *still-born*. Now indeed might every man and woman feel dread. A great "smelling-out" was ordered and after the first dance round—to the "Waus" and "Yebos" of all—the chief witch-doctor "smelt-out" 'Ningi. For a moment the King stared in amazement, then covering his face with his kaross ordered her to be taken away. She was killed within two minutes. Such was the power of these priests.

It was towards the end of February that I was present by the invitation of King Lobengula at the Great Dance, the celebration of the 'Nxxwala or what we should call the harvest thanksgiving; the one occasion in the whole year when every impi in the Matabele army was summoned to Bulawayo—the "Place of Blood"—the Royal Kraal to be reviewed by the King, doctored for war and given mouti by the witch-doctors. This was the time of the greatest smelling-out of the year.

The Black, Black One was always keenly interested

in this great review, for he dearly loved and was very proud of his impis. He seemed to me to take the greatest delight in the doctoring of the regiments; this was supposed to make them invincible in war. Undoubtedly the belief of the warriors in the efficacy of the mouti made them quite impervious to fear.

He, as the Highest Priest in the nation, had to superintend the ceremony personally, also there had to be the yearly consultation in regard to the smelling-out of the abagatagi—wizards who worked evil; afterwards there would be consultations as to what impis should be sent on “stamping-out” expeditions and which should have the honour.

It was certainly an awe-inspiring sight to me to see the whole of the army in review but the subsequent orgy of blood and bestiality was loathsome.

Thousands and thousands of men, women and children were camped round Bulawayo in temporary straw huts; in addition were the many shelters for the warriors called in for the ceremony.

All day dozens and dozens of young girls in single file marched backwards and forwards with huge platters of red meat; others carried large calabashes on their heads full of native beer—twala.

Impis of young recruits who had done their training were arriving constantly, singing songs and praising the King in the most extravagant way. Other impis of older warriors, each impi dressed in some distinctive way or carrying distinctive war shields of ox-hide—all wearing different and beautiful head-dresses of ostrich

plumes—marched by with the precision of old soldiers.

Fires were everywhere, cooking meat, and the smell from these fires of ox-dung, together with that of the meat and the smell from human bodies made a stench it was hard to bear.

All was excitement, men singing and shouting, children yelling, women chattering, oxen bellowing with fear, frightened by the smell of blood, dogs barking, yet everywhere I sensed a feeling of terror among the people.

The next day I went to the great open space beyond the Royal Cattle Kraal (these cattle were the pride of Lobengula's heart and were eventually part of the loot we took in the war) and here I saw a sight that if I live to be a hundred I shall never forget.

Fifteen thousand Matabele warriors in impis, had formed themselves into a great crescent and were singing their war songs; all the time stamping their feet and keeping to a certain rhythm. In the distance through the dense dust which was raised by the troops, I could make out the crowds of women and children. Most of the women were dancing and stamping in perfect unison with the troops and working themselves up to a frenzy.

In the very centre, the cynosure of all eyes, were the chief witch-doctor and his assistants. These were decked out in all the paraphernalia of their trade. Crowns of feathers, necklets of bladders and entrails of frogs and other small reptiles.

Suddenly the singing stopped, the great clouds of

dust disappeared, the sun shone out and showed up the warriors in all their splendid, savage array. The whole army stood as if they were statues.

Marching from the Royal Kraal came the Matabele King, Lobengula, the Lion of Lions, and as I looked at him I thought that he was one of the most imposing and splendid-looking men I had ever seen, a truly royal sight in his splendid robe of leopard skins which was flung over one shoulder, a band of leopard skin round his head with a gorgeous crane's feather stuck in it and carrying in his hand a beautifully-made throwing assegai.

Slowly he walked to the middle of the open space and halted. The moment that he stopped the Royal Salute burst out from all those thousands of warriors as if from one enormous loud-speaker.

"Bayete, Bayete."

A short pause—say, long enough for one to have counted twenty—then from one end of the line came a shrill whistle. Another slight pause of perhaps two seconds, then gradually the assegais began to rattle against the shields. Softly at first, then louder and louder, until the noise was deafening. A last crash and then silence for another twenty seconds, then again that thundering, booming roar of "Bayete, Bayete."

Lobengula stood there for perhaps as long as five minutes—it seemed longer to me—gazing at his magnificent troops in rapt attention and affection. Then he raised his assegai high above his head. In a second every man let out a perfect scream of delight and then the most wonderful sight of all occurred.

Those splendid savages—perfect warriors every one, even if they were devils—waved their assegais above their heads and charged towards their King. It looked to me as if they would trample over him. Suddenly as one man they halted, paused and then retired again to their first position. Then twelve cattle were driven into the open space by some umfanes and were driven about while blood-maddened warriors plunged their assegais into them again and again until they were all killed.

Then began more gorging and drinking of twala, dancing and quarrelling until the whole place was like a devils' cauldron. Lastly, there was the great "smelling-out", such as I have already described, only on a much larger scale.

These pictures will give some idea of the people whom we fought in the first Matabele War. Brave, ruthless, savage, but a people with many fine traits.



## CHAPTER SIX

IN the days of which I am now going to write, there were very few white men in either Mashonaland or Matabeleland; for it was far from easy to get permission from the King to enter the country either to hunt or trade. There were a few privileged white men like Colenbrander, Thompson and perhaps half-a-dozen more allowed in, but not many.

I have always thought that it was a great pity that the Matabele had no written language in those days, and no man to record some of the many Homeric deeds done by its great warriors.

Men like Mose-li-katze, right down to Lobengula, the King, or his great indunas like Umjaan and Sekombo, all had deeds of mighty fighting and bravery to their credit. They were cruel, but only as were all the other races in their vicinity. Names like these were names to conjure with in Mashonaland and Matabeleland. I had been up there twice before and was now treking up there again hoping to get permission from the King to hunt and trade. I had crossed the great river—the mighty Limpopo—and had laagered, sending on a native runner with a present for the King and asking his permission to enter his country. To my astonishment this was not only refused but my runner

had been actually threatened by the King; it was so unusual that, leaving a good "Cape Boy" in charge of the laagered waggons, I mounted my Basutu pony and started off to the Royal Kraal to find out what was the matter.

Arrived at Bulawayo, I was able—through the good services of an induna with whom I was acquainted—to get instant audience with the Great Black One. Nude except for a mutya, a tiny apron the size of a lady's handkerchief, looking every inch a king and the ruler of a great fighting race, he stood and looked at me.

He said: "Umlungu—white man—I did not want you to come, now that you are here I am pleased." Turning to his retinue of indunas and old councillors, he said to them: "Begone, I speak for the ears of this umlungu alone."

When they had left he continued:

"Umlungu, I want you to leave and go to the high veldt at once, for war is about to come."

"War, Mighty Elephant," I answered, "who dare wage war on the Lion of Lions?"

"With my own blood shall I fight. Spears are being sharpened secretly by wicked ones at night in their huts. Wau! the abagati (wizards) think that I know not. The jackals dare to say that I, Lobengula, son of my father Mose-li-katze, am not of pure blood. Say that my mother was a Makalaka or a slave Mashona. My father, who had the wisdom of a serpent in war, the courage of a lion in battle and the craftiness of a hundred Izaunsi in council; he who had the will and

ability to found this nation and break away from the great Zulu king; had not such a man as that the right to pick his own woman with whom to mate and to give him a son? He, the mighty Mose-li-katze was the breeder of his own son. Had he not that right, umlungu? Tell me?"

"Of a very truth, Mighty One, your father had such right," was my answer to the angry and perturbed King.

"Umlungu, see this scar," he pointed to a great gash running across his mighty chest, "won in battle. Many times have I proved my worth as a fighter. I am unbeaten. Ten times have I fought men in single combat and won. I am fierce with a fierce people but I am just. I love my people and now I am sad because evil minds poison some against me.

"If I destroy them, then I destroy some of my best warriors, some of my best councillors. If I do not so the wicked magic in the breasts of the Izaunsi would remain."

"Stamp out the abagati, the Izaunsi, the intriguing priests who always make trouble, oh King!"

"Wau! umlungu, that is not so easy. They are talking dark, (hinting in metaphors) among the people and all their spawn are talking sedition. It must be stopped. Wau, umlungu, but I am puzzled! You white men, I know, have much dark wisdom which we people have not. You have more true knowledge and wisdom than the Izaunsi and they fear you. My people fear the wizards from the bottom of their hearts. When the witch-doctors speak they believe

that truly it is the spirits speaking through them, but all the while it is the 'mlimo (chief wizard). Preachers of your religion are the same, they have come to me and prayed me to show mercy, yet they give it to none who do not believe exactly as they do. They pray that all shall speak the truth, yet I often find that they are double-faced. Still, umlungu, some Great One in the heavens has given you all wisdom. Tell me, white man, whom I have befriended in the past and will again—tell me, what you in your wisdom would do if you were King?"

There it was, even with this all-powerful, savage King, the same old game as in civilization; Church and Church intrigue versus King and State, High Priest or Archbishop against King. The craving for earthly power, the desire to dominate even this savage monarch.

I said to King Lobengula: "We have a saying in the book of our God, 'an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth'. But, O King! I would advise that you be the one to take the eye first. Strike and strike quickly, Great King, and it may be that the wicked ones will be blinded and unable to strike back. Are you not the Great Elephant who makes the earth tremble?"

"Yebo, umlungu! Wau! But you have wisdom and speak with the wisdom of a snake. Go now and do not hunt until I send you word. When it comes to you, you shall indeed know if I am Lobengula, King of the Matabele, of the House of Matsho-bane."

Matabeleland had been having the worst drought which it had known in the memory of the oldest living native. Even the oldest of the Mashonas—the original inhabitants—could not remember such a dry period. This drought had caused untold misery, suffering and terrible loss to the Matabele. Their cattle—and the Matabele depended entirely on their herds—which constituted their wealth, died in hundreds, nay thousands. This year they had tried moving their cattle to a place farther north which was usually a good grass country, even when the other parts were dried up, but it was only a few weeks before the cattle had eaten this clean.

No sign of rain, not a cloud in sight, the sky like molten brass and the sun pouring down. Its terrific heat baked the earth and roasted the skin. Grass disappeared, burnt up; streams, even rivers, dried up. The ground was baked hard as brick and gave back the thud of feet as if a warrior had kicked his hard hide shield.

Now the cries of the Izaunsi—the rainmakers—were heard day and night and they made much mouti—magic—in their kraals, but all to no purpose.

The King summoned all his indunas, great captains and councillors, to the Royal Kraal. They came from all the kraals in the country and the King knew that many were his enemies, many were under the dominance and fear of the devilish wizards.

Summoned by the call of his gigantic herald they assembled in the great space in front of his Royal Hut. Then in absolute silence the King spoke:

"Indunas, Captains and Councillors. The land cries out for rain. The great Izaunsi have made much mouti and still there is no rain. They have demanded great gifts of cattle from all; even from me the King. These have been given them. Not one person has denied them what they have asked. Still there is no rain. Now I, your King, ask you. Shall the Izaunsi, the witch-doctors be called to this indaba? The land is sick, our cattle die. Say, Chiefs and Councillors, shall these wizards be forced to make rain? If they cannot, then truly they are all false and not rainmakers. Shall I summon them, O Indunas, Captains, Chiefs and great Councillors?"

As one voice there came a shout:

"Summon the Izaunsi, O King! Your words are the words of wisdom, Great, Great One!"

To the herald the King said: "Summon these wizards, bid them come to me at once or my spears may prick them to hasten them."

Soon they appeared, draped in all their loathsome decorations of entrails, fingers, monkey skins, snake and frog bladders. The King, mincing no words, told them that it was now a case of make rain or be fed to the sacred crocodiles who were hungry, as they knew. Cunningly the cowardly devils played for time, knowing by the ring in the King's voice that he meant to battle with them to the death. Bowing their heads before the King, the Umlimo threw himself on the ground at his feet and asked that they be given the one thing that would be sure to supply the ingredient their mouti needed for instant rain to come; namely,

a full grown, male lion without a scratch, wound or blemish. They must have it at once and instantly they would make rain and relieve the land.

Matabele custom, stronger than all the King's power, allowed the Izaunsi to demand—and have supplied to them—whatever was necessary for them to make their mouti. They were rich and they were feared and now thought that by asking the impossible they had found a way out of their predicament. "Wau!" gasped the people, "a full grown, male lion without wound or blemish."

King Lobengula now summoned the Indhlovo impi; this was composed of young warriors who had not yet blooded their spears. A boastful, noisy, hot-blooded lot of young devils who thought themselves better than even the Imbesu, the King's Guards of old, tried, and invincible warriors.

The King received them with great ceremony. Then he asked them:

"Is it true what I have heard? That you boast of being my cubs, lion cubs; nay, even full-grown lions?"

"Bayete, Bayete." The Royal salute rang out from the impi. Then: "It is so, Great King."

"Are you ready to save the country from a great danger, where your bravery will be tested to the full, or are you bragging umfanes (boys)? Speak truly."

"We are ready, Great One." The spontaneous answer rang out from their throats as one voice.

"Then go at once and do not return until you have

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fetches what the great Izaunsi require of you, that is a full grown, male lion, without scratch or wound. See that you do not fail." The King turned his back on them and walked to his hut.

Now the impi held many indabas, for this was a serious matter; if they failed, then surely they would face the executioners, every man of them. There would be no exceptions made. At last the chief induna hit on a plan which would leave them all unhurt yet be sure to give them a lion without a mark or scratch on it. "Wau! Our father is truly wise in all things. Yebo! Is he not our chief and our father as well?" said the now happy youngsters.

Close to the great forest of Somabula were many large kraals of the despised Mashonas, cowards all of them, in all matters of warfare. Ever since Mose-likatze had entered Mashonaland from Zululand, these people had been the serfs, slaves and chattels of the Matabele, to do with as they wished. The killing of a few hundreds or thousands was a matter of no importance but it would give much amusement and entertainment to the young warriors. One morning the natives of a large kraal awoke to find it surrounded by an impi of the dreaded Matabele in full war panoply, ostrich plumes as their head-dresses, tufts of the same feathers on their elbows and knees; armed with huge war shields and throwing assegais, bangwaans (stabbing spears) and kerrie sticks (clubs), they were a sight which struck fear and horror to the hearts of the craven Mashonas.



Now the dread sentence was passed on to the cringing Mashona chief. "The Great, Great Elephant sends his word to you. Catch for me a full grown lion, a male, without wound, scratch or blemish or your kraal shall be stamped flat and every man, woman and child be killed."

A gasp of relief went up from all. A cry of actual joy and the chief without any delay picked out the two hundred men whom he decided would be needed for the work. All that day and the next was spent in making nets for the work, but the Matabele saw to it that not a soul was allowed through their ring of sentries, posted around the kraal. Then, at last all was ready and the hunters left, closely guarded by the Matabele impi.

Lions were not only numerous in that vicinity but they were all of exceptional size. Knowing their habits as the Mashonas did, it was not long before they came on a den on a hillside.

An indaba was held by the Mashona hunters, and they decided to make a living circle round the lair, this to be two men deep. They would close up closer and closer until the lions—they had seen two—were within their reach. A gigantic young Mashona, proud of his youthful strength, first entered the den. There was a terrific roar which shook the ground and then a deathly silence. Not a sound was heard. That youth did not return.

Now the Mashona hunters closed in until they were within fifty yards of the entrance to the lair. This close-up had made their lines three men deep. Then

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out trotted four little cubs, they sniffed the air, gambolled and then went in again. Their paws and faces had been red with blood from the body of the brave young Mashona.

Two minutes and then at the entrance stood a magnificent male lion with a splendid mane, a huge beast, and just behind him was his mate. Both of them had their faces thick with blood. They had been feeding.

Slowly the Mashonas closed in; now trembling with fear, but the Matabele spears were behind them and they might more easily expect mercy from the lions than from the Matabele. Then another lion and lioness came from the cave mouth. Now the lions started to walk round and round the circle of the Mashonas, slowly and as if curious to see what these natives could want. They were plainly puzzled.

Panic seized the Mashonas, they turned and there encircling them, assegais ready to plunge in their backs, were the Matabele warriors, grinning with horrible glee at the predicament of their slaves. As if to give taste and warning of their fate, the chief induna plunged his bangwaan into the breast of a Mashona, giving the killing cry of "sgee, 'sgee," and hurling the wretched man into the circle for the lions.

Now six of the Mashonas rushed at the nearest lion, clinging on to his mane, tail and body. The splendid brute rose on his hind legs, then slashed out right and left like a boxer, smashing those six to pieces so that they never rose again.

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A shout came from the induna: "Advance, capture a lion or we stamp you out."

Terrified, panic-stricken, the Mashonas rushed on the lions and these striking as a kitten does at play, brushed the Mashonas by dozens with their great paws. All the while shrieks and yells of pain and terror rent the air from the hunters. A bite, or a blow from a paw and a Mashona fell each time. Bleeding, broken, ripped and mangled they fell in heaps and the assegais of their torturers drove them on.

The lions were now no longer in a panic, but like great kittens, thoroughly enjoying themselves; even the cubs joined in this seemingly splendid game, the fat little fellows tackling the dying and attempting to shake them by their throats.

On went that mad and awful struggle. Surely no Roman arena ever showed a more inhuman or ghastly spectacle.

The lions tired of it, were actually exhausted by the work of killing. Then one young Mashona, a little bolder than the rest, got a noose over the head of one of the male lions. It was the end. Another and another was got over his head, his legs and his body. Weight told and half choked he was safely tied up at last without even a scratch. The other lions and the cubs bounded away from the now broken circle.

With chants of praise of their own prowess, carrying the lion so that it would receive no hurt, the impi started back to the Royal Kraal.

A runner sent ahead told the news to the King and

out trotted four little cubs, they sniffed the air, gambolled and then went in again. Their paws and faces had been red with blood from the body of the brave young Mashona.

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A runner sent ahead told the news to the King and

he ordered a great review and reception for his brave impi. Also every Izaunsi in the kingdom received orders to be present to receive their male, full grown lion. Death was to be the reward for any staying away.

Now there was great rejoicing throughout the land, for the King sent heralds to announce that what the Izaunsi wanted had been secured and that rain was certain.

The great open space before the Royal Kraal was a magnificent sight. Impi after impi, each with distinctive coloured ostrich plumes and war shields, stood before their King. Each impi was fully armed and equipped and before each stood the indunas and captains, wearing splendid crane's plumes stuck in a band of leopard-skin round their heads, magnificent leopard skins over their shoulders and the ghesla or head ring on their heads.

On the appearance of King Lobengula, the royal salute boomed from ten thousand deep, bass throats.

"Bayete, Bayete."

Now the Indhlovo impi came marching through a side gate and the bound lion was carried in and placed inside a circle. Around the lion twenty plump young intombis (unmarried girls) danced a graceful dance. Then followed a dance by the successful impi until at a signal all stopped and closed up in their ranks.

Drawing his magnificent figure to its full height, head flung back, a challenge in his eye for the Izaunsi, the King spoke:

"Warriors of the Matabele, Cubs of the Lion, Indunas, Councillors and Captains, our snake (spirit guardian) has protected us. Your fellow-warriors have brought back what the Izaunsi need for their strong magic, for the mouti which they swore would give us rain. There lies the lion they asked for. The male lion without wound or scratch. Now indeed will they be able to call on the heavens and we shall be saved and you and your children shall not perish. But suppose that they cannot make rain even now, my warriors and indunas? Suppose that they shall prove to be false wizards, to be liars and cheats who have taken your gifts for many years? Well, then, I as King waive my Royal right and leave the sentence to you. What shall it be, my people? What shall you ask of your King that he shall do to them?"

"Death for the cheats," came the shout from every throat on the parade ground.

"Death it shall be, my people. Death indeed. I will make water for the ground, but it shall be watered with their blood. The blood of wizards who have always urged me to have 'smellings-out' and asked for your blood for sacrifice. Blood there shall be, the blood of cowardly priests, not of warriors, the blood of every Izaunsi in the land. Have I spoken as you wish? Answer!"

"Yes, Mighty Elephant. Yebo, Father!" and there was a ring of unholy joy in their voices. The Izaunsi were in for a bad time.

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King Lobengula turned to the now thoroughly scared witch-doctors. "Dance, pray, conjure, call to your evil spirits. Speak softly to all your ghosts. Call and make rain, you Mighty Abágati, you Great Izaunsi. You, (pointing at him) the Mighty Umlimo, but waste no time."

The Umlimo now ventured to speak:

"We must have an elephant to go with the lion . . ."

He got no further. "Go for your elephant then," said Lobengula, "but go as a ghost," and he ripped the head wizard with his great spear.

"Come to us, you who are friends, lest we curse you," screamed the terrified Izaunsi.

A few, perhaps a dozen started to run towards them to fall pierced by the spears of the loyal Imbesu, the magnificent King's Guards.

Then the great King, tossing his splendid head-dress as he shook his head in his terrible rage, called on all his loyal impis to show their loyalty to the House of Matsho-bane and to himself.

In the splendid picturesque idiom of the sonorous Zulu-Matabele language, with all its fine metaphors, he poured out his accusations against the Izaunsi and cursed them. His oratory was superb, even for those born orators, the Matabele and Zulus.

The eyes of every warrior were fixed in fascination on their warrior king. He towered over them physically and mentally; dominating them in every way. He wound up:

"I am a maker of rain, but I keep my word. My executioners shall make rain as I command, red rain,



blood-red rain, got from the vile bodies of these false and lying Izaunsi, O people of the Matabele, these priests who always delighted in the great 'smellings-out'!

"Who was it who always cried for gifts, gifts, gifts?"

"The Izaunsi, death to them," came the cry from thousands of throats.

Now the executioners closed round the wizards, who were screaming with fear and grovelling on the ground. In a few minutes it was all over. One hundred odd had suffered the death they so loved to see others suffer.

"Matabele warriors," said the King, "I have indeed washed the land. Washed it clean of fear of these priests. Washed it with their blood, bright red blood. Answer me now. *Am I your King?*"

Came a deathly stillness. A silence which was as if even every insect had hushed. Then a tremor of sound was heard. Then the gentle, oh, so gentle, rattle of spears against the shields of the warriors. Louder and louder it grew, gathering volume and tempo until it deafened. Then slowly it died down and faded away into the same silence.

Came a hissing whistle and then in one tremendous boom, as from the hearts of that fierce nation of fighting men, out roared the royal salute, the right only of the Zulu-Matabele kings.

"Bayete! Bayete!"

Again silence. Now every induna and captain stepped forward, shield to the front, assegais held aloft. They chanted.

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"Mighty Black One you are our King,  
Great Black, Black Elephant you have stamped  
out our curse.  
Son of a Black She Elephant of the Herd.  
Great, Great One of the Royal House of  
Mose-li-katze  
You are the King. Baba. Inkosel" (*lit.*, Father  
and King).

Lobengula stood and faced his people, proudly.

Came a message to me from the Great, Great One,  
saying:

"Umlungu, truly you had the wisdom of your people. The Black Elephant has put his foot on the Izaunsi. They are stamped flat and never again can they raise their hideous heads. There was a good blood-letting and the ghosts of the wizards must have interceded, for rain came the next day and all my people are happy. Go in peace (*hamble gahle*). May your snake protect you and these cattle are a present from the True King."

He had sent me twenty cattle, beauties from the royal herds.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

**B**EFORE starting to write about Lobengula and the Matabele War, in the course of which I shall have to say many hard things about him, let me relate two really fine acts of his towards whites, which should always be remembered as being greatly to his credit.

His liking for white men, especially for a few of the best sort of pioneers, was known to all. One of these was a man named Maund—I am not sure, but I think his first name was Edward—who was at the Royal Kraal at the outbreak of the war. No one will deny the fact that we all expected to hear that Lobengula would kill every white man when war broke out. To the everlasting credit of the King he gave all the whites in and around his kraal full warning and safe conduct out of the country.

The other thing to his credit was that when the war had been on for some time and his impis had been severely beaten in several fights and had suffered two great defeats; when the passions of his impis were aroused and his men were clamouring to blood their spears on all whites and to be allowed to eat their livers, two white men, Usher and Fairburn, were brought as prisoners to Bulawayo. Lobengula took

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these two white men under his personal protection and threatened to throw to the executioners any man, even an induna, who might dare to injure a hair of their heads.

These were fine acts for a savage despot who was being despoiled of his kingdom.

I know that when I arrived at Bulawayo, I as well as all the others was astonished to find that these two men were not only still alive, but that they had been well looked after in every way, having been given a hut next to that of the King himself. Lobengula had himself visited them every day to see that they were well.

There was not another chief or king in all Africa who would have acted with such restraint—nay, Royal generosity.

As there has always been a lot of controversy and very vague ideas about the data of the Pioneer occupation of Matabeleland and the strength of the Matabele nation at that time, I will give some figures which were generally accepted as being correct by men who knew and whose opinions were never questioned by South Africans—men like “Matabele” Thompson, Fred Selous, Heenay, Johnson, Major Forbes and Captain Wilson.

These men and many others of the pioneers who knew the Matabele well, placed the number of fighting men in the regular impis as being over twenty-five thousand; to these, however, must be added at least the same number in the umfane impis—young

warriors in training impis—these being men who had not yet blooded their spears.

Most of the impis of seasoned warriors such as the King's Guards—the Imbezu impi—the Ingubu and the Insuk-amini and one or two more, took great pride in the fact that they could claim to be—every man of them—of pure Zulu stock and that their impis carried on all the best of the old Zulu traditions. As a matter of fact, there were hundreds of Zulus in them, who had fought against us in the Zulu War and been present at the great battle of Isandhlwana, when a whole British Brigade had been wiped out.

Most of the other impis, however, contained a large leavening of local tribes, such as the Makalaka, Bamangwatos, and even some of the despised Mashonas. There were also a great number of half-breeds, the result of inter-marrying or having children by concubines from these tribes. Impis containing this type of men were called by the Zulu-Matabele Impis, Amaboli men.

It was these last impis which eventually proved the weak link in the Matabele military system, second only to the Zulu in splendid efficiency.

It would be tedious to the reader to go into all the details of how the concession for the British South African Chartered Company was wheedled or obtained by false pretences from the Matabele King. I think that I am right in saying that there were really about five of these concessions in all. The first was obtained by a South African named Edwards, but this

concession was never of any use to him—he had no influence in England.

The British South African Chartered Company was floated on the London Stock Exchange with a capital of £1,000,000, which was quickly subscribed. Several relatives of mine—members of the Stock Exchange—were among those who helped make a market for the shares and did themselves very well by it.

Now came the great, the gigantic task of going into and occupying a country of more than 150,000 square miles, held by a great warlike race, who had never known defeat and whose King did not really understand what rights he had given away in the document to which he had put his mark and elephant seal.

Showing that this was the case, let me add that the promoters of the Chartered Company—and this included Rhodes himself—thought that a force would be needed of from five to ten thousand men, well armed and equipped with the most modern weapons of those days. They had some cause for thinking in these figures, for it was less than twenty years back to the Zulu War and still less than that to the days of Majuba Hill and the first Boer War, when we had had one of the worst drubbings a great nation can have, at the hands of a small nation of farmers.

These figures, however, were not those that my friend, employer and old commander, F. Johnson, thought would be needed. Johnson knew all that part of South Africa thoroughly—every kopje, kloof and

kranze—from the borders of the old Colony to the Matopos. He was only a young man then but clever, resourceful, daring, and a shrewd judge of the Matabele character; speaking the language like the Matabele themselves.

He gave Rhodes as his opinion, that the country could be occupied with five hundred men, but made this proviso; they must be hand-picked and that he should be entrusted with the forming of the most perfect corps of pioneers ever known in the history of the British Empire—the famous Matabele Pioneer Force, a *corps d'élite* of Colonials, with a leavening of Englishmen. All were to be crack shots, proved first class horsemen and more than seventy-five per cent had to be trained tradesmen of one kind or another. The remainder were to be professional men such as doctors, surveyors, architects, mining engineers and a half-dozen professional soldiers, all of these last had to have had plenty of South African service—active.

The very best man in South Africa, for this kind of work, was put in charge of the Intelligence Department; this was Fred Selous, great hunter, trader and a fine character in every way. The transport was in charge of another expert, a man named Burnett, who was given the title of Commandant of Transport. Burnett was certainly the best transport-rider and organizer in the whole country. He was killed almost at the start of the Matabele War.

With the column there were five hundred picked natives; these were mainly from the Colony and

Bechuanaland. The transport consisted of eight hundred and forty waggons, pulled by two thousand trek-oxen. The artillery consisted of four seven-pounders and these were mainly manned by ex-members of that very famous corps, the Cape Mounted Rifles. Five maxims and one rocket gun made up what might be called the balance of the artillery and there was a searchlight for night attacks; this was to be worked by the machine for a saw mill which was being taken up by the column.

This truly gigantic column finally left Kimberley the end of March—I think on the twentieth, but my memory is not very sure on the date—and reached what was afterwards known as Salisbury at the beginning of September; a really marvellous performance when it is remembered that this trek or march covered a distance of nearly five hundred miles; of this a road, two hundred and thirty miles in length, had to be hacked through thick bush by the Pioneers under Fred Selous.

This wonderful celerity took the Matabele completely by surprise and undoubtedly stopped them from attempting to make any resistance, but the trouble was smouldering all the while and every care had to be taken in scouting, making posts, forts and in any work away from the main column.

During this great trek I was mainly employed on transport work, but at times in scouting ahead of Selous' pioneers. It was whilst engaged on this last work that I took part in one of the few attacks made by the Matabele at that time.



I was with a troop of Cape Boys, from the Cape Boys' Corps. The troop was composed of fifty boys and two white N.C.O.'s, both ex-Cape Mounted Police. It was a scratch lot certainly as regards looks, clothing and drill; but as fine a lot of fighting material as any man could wish to command.

Early one morning when it was so bitterly cold that my feet could hardly feel the stirrup irons, I was riding on patrol when I heard through the raw morning mist a strange sound, a long-drawn wailing howl which was broken every now and then by a loud humming hiss.

The "boy" riding just behind me urged his horse up close to mine and whispered to me:

"Baas, that sound is from Matabele who are dancing a war dance."

It was that, not the slightest doubt, and they were near to us. It seemed to me that they must be in some deep kloof near by, the barbaric chords rose higher and higher, in a wave of chants and with each repetition I heard the well-known thundering stamp of the warriors' feet; the effect was weirdly grand and awe-inspiring in the misty fog. It made my blood run cold to think that I must be almost on them and yet could not see any signs.

Then suddenly a puff of wind lifted the foggy blanket, revealing not two hundred yards away, three or four hundred eager, grim, blood-thirsty faces worked up to passion heat by the dance—and they spotted me as soon as I had them. With a roar

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of rage and thirst for our blood, they came at us like greyhounds released from the kennels at the hare.

I had received the strongest possible orders against opening fire on or becoming embroiled in any way with the Matabele, if it could possibly be avoided. Here I could see no way out of it. I shouted out orders for my men to dismount and then ordered one volley. Those "boys" obeyed like veterans—though they were facing the dreaded Matabele for the first time—the volley seemed to shock the young warriors and they dropped to cover in the fairly long grass; this gave me the opportunity to follow out orders and I gave the command to mount and retire in half troops. Seeing that we were not followed, I then had the troop gallop off and I reported to Selous. It was the last we saw of the Matabele on that occasion, though for some days after, when out scouting, I spotted small numbers of them far out on either of our flanks.

Immediately on crossing the Macloutsie River, the huge column was formed into two large laagers each night. At the four openings a seven-pounder was placed, while the Maxims were also put at commanding points. Every waggon had its number and was assigned to a certain place in the laagers; under no circumstances was this ever altered. Each man was given a certain waggon to sleep under and on which to rally at night in the event of attack, and one-third were always awake and ready for instant action.

Before starting, for three weeks there had been constant practice in such work as forming laager quickly from column of route and with the splendid material we had, it was miraculous the speed with which this was done. We had been inspected by Colonel Methuen—afterwards Field Marshal—just before we started and he was pleased to say that even by Guards' standards of smartness, there was not much we could learn in celerity of movement and getting things done on the double.

At night, or immediately laager had been formed, the horses were picketed inside the enclosures by long thick reins stretched across from one side to the other. The cattle were placed between the two laagers in a scherm or fence made of thick thorn bush. All around outside the laager at night were moving Cossack posts of the Cape Boys' Corps; farther out still would be a dozen scouts—experienced white men—while closer around the waggons would be sentries lying down in the grass or bush. No nonsense like marching up and down for those men.

The first week in August, just after I had crossed the Lundi River with my scouts, I ran across Colenbrander, who had come directly from King Lobengula to inform the Commandant of the column that he must go back as the King said that his young men—more than seven thousand of them—had started on the road to wipe us out. I passed Colenbrander back with a small escort and that evening after we had made laager I was told by Johnson and Selous that I had been chosen to go scouting the next day with Heaney

well ahead of the column up into the Matabele country.

I was immensely proud of this, as Heaney was a first-class man, and had a fine record in native warfare and scouting work. Scouting in an enemy's country was to my mind, one of the most fascinating things about native warfare. To be successful at it, a man needed good steady nerves, a fine sense of direction, the ability to take immediate advantage of circumstances and surroundings, and to be a first-class shot and good horseman.

It surely was a great game. There were no prizes but there was constant excitement night and day, and how it made a man keep his eyes open and all his wits about him!

At last the column reached the Tukwe River. Here at a very small Makalaka village, I got word that a large Matabele impi was in the vicinity. Scouting around at least twenty miles ahead of the column, I came on tracks of two impis marching parallel to each other, about five miles apart and both tracks were in the path in which the Pioneer column would advance. I at once retired on the pioneers and sent two riders ahead at full speed to report to the column. Again it turned out to be a false alarm as far as any attack on our column was concerned. We never saw anything of the impis, but I saw evidence of their devilish work, for three days after I came on a village which they had stamped flat.

All September was spent by the whole force building the fort which was called Fort Salisbury; after the

Marquis of Salisbury, then Prime Minister; it was largely through his Imperial views that Rhodes had been able to secure the last Charter ever granted by the British Government. By the end of September the fort was finished, and so well, that it could have stood a siege as long as provisions held out. On October 1st the Pioneer Force was paraded for the last time and then disbanded, and each man given his licences, allowing him to peg out his claims and farms as promised on the terms of enlistment.

Hardly any of these pioneers and soldiers benefited by these. Gambling was rife and many richer men with the column were buying grants up at prices of £150 for fifteen claim rights, and farm rights for about the same sum. I knew two men who won as much as eight thousand pounds in claim paper, gambling at cards and using claims rights as counters. The same thing was done again in the Boer War by the Canadian troops. There each man got a grant of one hundred and sixty acres and rich Yankees and Canadians sent out representatives who bought these from the men in South Africa for £30 each.

In March of the next year there was talk all over the country among the settlers and in fact all the whites, about trouble brewing with the wretched little pygmies—the Portuguese—who were pushing into our territory from Mozambique. Later on, information came to Fort Salisbury that the Portuguese General Gouva and his second-in-command, Colonel Andrea, had entered the country with a force of one hundred

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and fifty white troops and three hundred native levies.

Major Forbes with twenty of the newly-formed British South African Police—a police force *second to none*—and forty volunteers with two officers of which I was one, was at once dispatched to the borders to stop this advance and not allow Gouva to come a foot further.

Arriving at the village of a little chief named Umtesa, Major Forbes found the Portuguese column, and without even waiting to form camp, promptly invaded the Portuguese quarters and arrested the two gallant leaders and disarmed all his pygmy troops—white and black, the last being by far the bravest.

It was one of the most amusing things that I have ever witnessed. The officers of this brave (?) people, who only live on sufferance in Africa, showing every sign of panic, immediately surrendered their arms while most of the rank and file dropped theirs and ran. After I had taken the sword and revolver from one officer, the brute tried to kiss me. Why the Germans do not take all Mozambique to-day from these filthy people who have not done a thing to develop this country and never will, is a mystery to me.

Major Forbes next advanced to Massi Kesi, the Portuguese fort, and took possession of that without a shot being fired. Now at the head of a great force consisting of ten police and twelve volunteers, one of whom was myself, the gallant Major continued his advance down the Pungwe River, about one hundred

and eighty miles. We were just about to embark on a fleet of troop-ships—to wit five canoes—and proceed to the river's mouth and there capture the port and town of Beira when unluckily we were caught up by a dispatch bearer with an order recalling the force at once. The Portuguese garrison in Beira only consisted of five hundred white soldiers at this time, with native levies, but I am quite sure that Major Forbes would have taken the town as easily as he had done the other places.

In May 1891, three hundred Portuguese troops and seven hundred Angola levies arrived at Massi Kesi. A captain of the B.S.A. Police—I have forgotten his name—was stationed at a camp not many miles away with a mixed force of fifty men—all white—police and volunteers. His camp was visited by the Portuguese Generalissimo and a large escort; this grandee gave the police captain twenty-four hours in which to vacate or be attacked by his brave army.

This Portuguese force was splendidly equipped, it even had a dozen of the very latest model Maxim guns—made in England and bought there by the Portuguese—and they were perfectly confident of wiping out the police captain and his fifty bedraggled-looking ruffians.

The next morning the attack took place, the Portuguese with the latest up-to-date rifles, fired three volleys into the Police camp but every bullet went far overhead, not a man was even scratched. The police force and their auxiliaries now replied with their old

Martini-Henry carbines—long ago discarded by the army as unfit for use—and ploughed the enemy's ranks. These men were crack shots and every bullet found a mark.

This was bad and demoralizing enough for the nerves of this race of hybrids, but when the police started firing their one seven-pounder with case shot, the Portuguese troops, white and black, did not stand on the order of their going, but, dropping all their arms, fled from the field, led by their officers.

Massi Kesi was abandoned by them and the fifty ragged ruffians—not fit to associate with the blue bloods of Portugal—occupied the fort. The loot they took included twelve Maxims, one thousand rifles and unlimited ammunition.

The Home Governments now got to work and the “dear old Allies of Great Britain” were handed back every acre of territory except Umtali which was really part of Matabele territory, and now became part of the British South Africa Chartered Company's land.

In 1892 the settlers of Mashonaland and Matabeleland were invited by the Chartered Company to form a force to be known as the Mashonaland Horse. Major Forbes was to be the Commandant but all the other officers were to be elected by the men themselves. The Chartered Company promised each man modern equipment with a uniform, horses and saddles.

I joined and was elected a lieutenant. Then the Chartered Company made another of their very bad



moves—many pioneers used a much stronger word—for no sooner was the Mashonaland Horse formed and equipped, than two-thirds of the police force were given their discharges. Merchants, settlers, ex-police-men, and the Mashonaland Horse all cried out: “Duped and sold again.”

## CHAPTER EIGHT

SINCE 1891, things had been going from bad to worse. The Matabele were restless as they could now see that the methods of the past would no longer be allowed. "Blooding of spears", "stamping out" of villages and such-like pleasures would have to be forgotten.

Matters came to almost a climax when the Mashona chief, Lomag-hondil, and his kraal were "stamped out". I came upon this kraal the next day. A Makalaka who had been one of the attacking impi and who had been left wounded in the long grass just outside the village stockade, gave to Johnson and myself the following account of what had occurred. It is recounted in the picturesque idiom of those people as far as my memory serves me.

"Our impi, 'nkose, was told by the Mighty Elephant: 'Go out and stamp flat this nest of vipers who work for the 'mlungu (whites). You shall "blood your spears" and it may be you shall earn the right to tonga.' (*Lit.*, sew in the head ring—be allowed to lobola or marry.)

"Our impi set out twelve hundred strong, 'nkose; not too large an impi, all young warriors but with two great and experienced indunas as our captains.

"We started at dawn when the mist was still on the

ground and after marching all one day and half of the next we came in sight of the kraal of the dog Lomag-hondil. The jackal who bayed at night and disturbed the rest of the Lion of Lions. The kraal was surrounded by a large fence of dried thorn bushes, very broad and the bushes were well laced.

"We advanced on that nest of vipers, chanting our war songs and our battle song of victory or death. Then the izinduna (chief induna) gave orders for us to charge in horn formation—the 'nkose knows the Zulu crescent—and surround the kraal.

"Wau! 'nkose, that was indeed a day! Those jackals had both teeth and the courage to use them. They waited for us behind their stockade, thick as bees swarming. Yebo! 'nkose, truly they fought well behind their fence. We were as lion cubs; we sprang to the charge but were met by spears, battle axes and kerrie sticks. Even the women thrust great bunches of prickly boughs in our faces. Those hyenas fought that day; truly they did not want to kiss our spears.

"Three, four times we hurled ourselves against that stockade and were thrown back, we the Matabele. Wau! 'nkose, that was bad; better to die there than go back to the Royal Kraal and face the executioners or the torturers, the reward of not carrying out the orders of the Great One!

"Our second induna was killed, the young warriors were losing heart and it was bad. Then the izinduna called for ten of our best runners and jumpers. To each was given a large kerrie stick with a bundle of oiled and lighted rags tied to it. They were to charge

the stockade and throw the kerries over on to the roofs of the huts, these roofs being of straw and very dry.

"Forward they charged in two batches from opposite directions. With my own eyes I saw three kerries with rags alight, drop on the roofs of huts close by, stay there, then the straw lighted and those rats were to be burnt out.

"Bright and clear the flames rose and with a roar we dashed forward again. Flames were spreading rapidly inside the stockade and even part of that was alight in places. At last we got in and then we saw red. We hacked and thrust at those Mashona rats, I felt my bangwaan go into them, again and again. My spear was so wet with blood that I could hardly hold it.

"By now, 'nkose, the kraal was well alight, and we were given an order by our induna and officers to retire and encircle the kraal so that none of the rats should escape.

"The flames were now roaring higher and higher; women, children, dogs and goats burst through the stockade. Wau! the heat made them willing to kiss our spears. They rushed to death on them.

"At last their warriors came charging out in a massed body, striking to right and left with stabbing spear, kerrie sticks and battle axes.

"Crash, crash. Yebo! 'nkose, as shield smashed against shield it was like the thunder of your big guns. Then they were in our midst. We closed round them. Was it possible that they could hack their way

through? Nay, 'nkose. Not through the ranks of such lion cubs as we. We who had tasted blood on our lips, were not to be denied. We would drink deeply.

"How we fought. Wau, truly they fought as well! In silence we fought on both sides, man to man, breast thrust against breast. Gasping, thrusting, stabbing, ripping. The crash of spear against shield, the thud of kerrie stick or club on heads; the fine exultant cry of, 'sgee, 'sgee; as one of our men got home and killed. The ripping cry of 'sutu', 'sutu' as the stomach of an enemy was ripped open. The crackling roar of the flames, the shrieks of the women and children! Wau! 'nkose, what music that was.

"Then we killed the last of their warriors. Ripped open the last woman. Stamped out the last of their children, dogs and goats; then tottering with fatigue, exhausted, but now mad for more blood, we looked round. We had indeed stamped that kraal flat but we had paid. They had fought well. No man of them had asked for mercy. To the last man they had died fighting.

"Now above the roar of the flames could be heard the ear-splitting screams of old hags burning. They still wanted to live and hated the kiss of death. Some rushed out and those we flung back again. That was indeed a stamping out."

This will give some idea of what the Matabele did on their raids and how close matters were to just such a thing as this being done to every outlying settler and all he cherished.

Trekking into Victoria on Friday, July 7th, I had

my waggon well loaded with supplies, but when within twenty miles of Victoria had been held up by a company of two hundred men belonging to the In-nobe impi; this was an impi of young warrior recruits, and it was only after threatening to open fire on them that they refrained from slaughtering every one of my boys—Mashonas.

One young devil had pressed his assegai against a boy's chest so that the point just penetrated, whilst another had his spear pressed against his back. Thoroughly incensed—but very rashly—I fired a shot at the front warrior's feet, and he jumped at least three feet in the air.

After this the captain in charge got his men under control; before marching off, however, he said to me: "'Nkose, we shall surely see you in your big kraal"—meaning Victoria.

At that moment I did not understand his meaning.

On my arrival at Victoria, I found the whole place preparing to go into laager and then heard that Dr. Jameson was expected any moment.

Sunday morning, July 9th, I was at breakfast by my waggons, when I heard a hellish uproar, and my boys all huddled under the waggons.

Screams, shrieks, piteous cries and blood-curdling shouts filled the air. A Matabele impi in full strength—the Ishbate impi—had entered the town, a crowd of Mashonas fleeing before them, and the Matabele were now killing every Mashona—man, woman or child—they could find.

In very many cases the most terrible atrocities were

committed on house-boys in the very presence of the whites employing them.

They would kill the poor devils then "blood their spears", plunging them again and again into the dead flesh.

At one house where a Mashona and his wife were employed, they staked the woman out, pinning her down with assegais, one in each arm and leg and a fifth in her stomach; smashing her husband to pieces with their kerrie sticks. All this was done in the presence of their white employer who was forced to stand and watch it all with his wife.

He was told, as were all whites that day: "Stand aside, umlungu (white man), stand aside. Your time will come quickly enough, to kiss our blades."

Chaos reigned in the town till Dr. Jameson took control; banding together all the armed men he could get, he decided that at all costs the impi should be driven across the river.

He now sent a messenger and summoned its head indunas, twelve in all, to an indaba at which I was present.

The indaba was short and to the point. Dr. Jim asked the chief induna if he could control his men or was he an umfane (youngster) as well?

On receiving an answer that he could, Dr. Jim told him to take his men away and cross the river immediately. If they had not left the vicinity of the city in one hour, then he would order his men to open fire.

Most of them left, but about four hundred remained

raising hell, burning Mashona huts, raping and then ripping the women open with stabbing spears and killing the men and children.

I was with Captain Lundy—a most unjustly abused man, who died a heroic death—when he started out with his troop to drive these men across the river.

When we came up to them they had just raided a small kraal of five huts and were engaged in throwing up a child and catching it on their spears. On the Captain's orders, given to him by Dr. Jim, we opened fire and the devils cleared off, leaving nine dead by the now burning kraal. Every man in the troop was dead keen to follow the Matabele up and give them a thorough good trouncing, but Captain Lundy would not hear of this. He said his orders were most emphatic to return as soon as he had driven them off.

What he did do, however, was to detail me with five men to follow them up and see if they actually crossed the river at the drift.

The country hereabouts was all thick thorn bush, and unluckily for me I became separated from my men. Hearing piteous cries and moans from a vlel (a small coombe) I lost my usual caution and rode towards the place whence the cries came. Here were six of the devils playing with a young intombi (unmarried girl) of about sixteen. They had raped her and had now impaled her. Not content with this they were committing other unprintable tortures on the poor girl.

I shot two as I galloped into the clearing and the others drew back. Three of these had their broad



stabbing assegais, the fourth only a kerrie stick. They were just preparing to rush me, when an induna came on the scene with whom I had had some cattle dealings.

Before I could say a word, he had sized up the situation and then spoke to those young bloods, just as any Guards Sergeant-Major might have done.

They left like whipped curs.

Turning to me he said: "'Nkose, go back quickly to your laager." Then looking at the girl—who could not live long—he continued, "it is better for her," and he ripped her stomach open from crutch to breast with his stabbing spear, then finished by hitting her over the head with his kerrie stick.

I wasted no time in getting back to Victoria and was the last in. I had been given up as another casualty.

Settlers with their wives and children were now flocking in from all parts and preparations were under way for giving the Matabele a lesson which they would understand. Before going into the details of the fighting, I will give another sidelight on the Matabele character. Some months previously, at no risk to myself in any way—though he chose to think differently—I had got an induna out of a swollen river.

He had been crossing at a drift and—as often happens—a rush of water had come down suddenly, caused by a rain-storm higher up. This had swept him off his feet and he looked like drowning. I was able to fling him a long reim; he luckily clutched this and I dragged him out.

The night of Sunday 9th, one of my boys roused me saying that a strange kaffir—a term of contempt, he little knew of whom he spoke—wished to speak to the Baas. I had him brought to the fire beside which I was lying, and it proved to be this induna, a man named 'Ntuswa.

"Greeting, 'nkose," he said, "I bring you word that all the Great One's impis are advancing and ready for a blooding of spears. In one force there are twelve thousand. Go, 'nkose, go back to your people, for I tell you that you will all be stamped flat, lapa wena di ga suka," (if you have not all gone—cleared out).

A gallant man's gratitude.

Feeling in Victoria was now running very high, for all felt—and rightly as it turned out—that if no further action were taken against the Matabele, Lobengula's hand would be forced by the young bloods; the following year or perhaps even month, might see a slaughter take place, in which every settler would be wiped out and even the forts.

Farmers, traders, miners, even the capitalists signed an address to Dr. Jim and threatened to trek out of the country, unless the Chartered Company settled the matter once for all, and that could only be done by breaking the military power of the Matabele. It was security for wives, families, themselves, their goods and lastly their workers—the Mashonas—which the whites wanted. These settlers were not men to be played with. They did not want war—all had seen plenty of that—but if the impis of the King could be

tamed and curbed in no other way, then war at once and get it done with. No more procrastination and foolish diplomacy. No waiting—as was afterwards done in the case of the mutiny—until white women had been raped and maltreated, and little children killed before the eyes of their mothers; used to blood Matabele spears.

At the very last moment, twelve waggons for transport were added to the Salisbury column. These enabled extra supplies to be carried and a much larger amount of ammunition; three hundred and fifty rounds extra for each man, besides supplies for the guns.

The three captains of the Salisbury Horse were Johnson, Heaney and Spreckley. With the Salisbury column there were two Maxim guns on galloping carriages, one Maxim one-pounder and one Gardner gun. These were all under the command of Captain Moberley, ex-R.A.—a man who had seen a lot of South African service.

Great difficulties were found in getting sufficient saddlery, what was procured was in very bad shape and half of it so poor that it was almost falling apart. Only fifty swords were forthcoming and only half the Salisbury men had bayonets. With the hundred and eighty revolvers issued—plus those privately owned—every man was eventually armed with these and each man issued with thirty rounds of ammunition.

Regulation clothing of any sort was very short, at any rate nearly every man preferred wearing his own but all were issued with Bedford-cord breeches, leggings, a good hat, waterproof sheet and two blankets and a good cavalry cloak.

At the last moment the Victoria column was put under the command of Major Alan Wilson, one of the most popular men in the country at the time. A man who had fought through six native wars and who had the most extraordinary, almost magnetic power over

men. He had started as a trooper in the Cape Mounted Rifles.

The columns started out on September 5th. Major Forbes had explained to me that his idea was for the three columns to act separately. They were to make direct for Bulawayo from their three starting points, clearing the country as they advanced, taking care that they left no unbeaten force in their rear. He thought that the effect of the three columns coming from different points, would serve to fluster the Matabele, perhaps even demoralize them and cause them to break up their forces. Should they, however, fall back on Bulawayo, all our forces would join up in the neighbourhood before making an assault.

Personally, I felt satisfied that a body of troops such as I was with, was pretty safe against defeat, unless it should be attacked by overwhelming forces of the enemy when in a bad position or our column be badly led; this last was not likely with a man of Major Forbes' character. Every man in that outfit felt the same about him. Efficiency was what he insisted upon, as he demonstrated when soon after starting, his chief of staff proved to be totally unfit for the job, and was immediately demoted. Also he showed no favouritism; and his young brother, who all thought should have been given a commission, served as a trooper—and a darned good one—in A. troop.

No special dishes and linen at Forbes' dinner table. His upturned box for the mess of himself and his staff had the same meals served on it as was served to the men. He would have no officer—to their credit none

## CHAPTER NINE

**D**URING the week which followed the driving out of the Matabele from Victoria, Dr. Starr Jamieson, as Administrator of Mashonaland, started to make all arrangements to smash for once and ever, the Matabele impis; so that they would never be fighting units again. He announced his plans to all the heads and then without any delay—the rainy season was very close—put them into force.

As I shall have a lot to say of that splendid fighter and leader—Major Forbes—I will now describe him as I knew him. He was a man of about thirty-six or seven. Well built, slightly on the heavy side, showing every sign of great strength. He had a well-shaped head, broad forehead, thick hair which was slightly wavy in front and a heavy moustache which covered both lips.

I think—but am not certain—that he came from somewhere near Reading. He was at this time Resident Magistrate at Salisbury and also Commandant of the Salisbury Light Horse. He had been an Imperial officer—a good one from a Colonial's viewpoint—and had seen severe fighting against the Zulus. He was recklessly brave, yet a prudent leader with it, and a clever fighter in native warfare. His name will

come into prominence later on in connection with the tragic Shangaani Patrol.

Dr. Jim's plans were that 350 men should advance from Salisbury, 300 from Victoria and 275 from Tuli; those from Fort Salisbury were to be under the command of Major Forbes, those from Victoria under Captain Lundy and the Tuli contingent under a man named Commandant Raaf. This last named had been in nearly every native war in South Africa up to that period and had a good name as a leader amongst South Africans.

The whole of this force was to be mounted, the transport was to be on pack animals. They were to start simultaneously, converge on Bulawayo and attack. Each man was to carry four days' food, then he would have to live on the country—no hardship for this type of man—and each man would carry 250 rounds of ammunition.

Major Forbes has been adversely criticized by many for being rash—even of misleading Dr. Jim—in agreeing to invade the Matabele country with such a miserably small force when not so long before an Imperial Officer had given it as his opinion—how little any Imperial Officer, except a few like Forbes and Baden-Powell, ever knew or learnt about African fighting!—that this could not be done without a force of at least 7,000 trained troops.

I always thought that though the Matabele might have been over-rated, yet they would prove a very tough nut to crack for such a small force—good though all the material was from which it was formed.

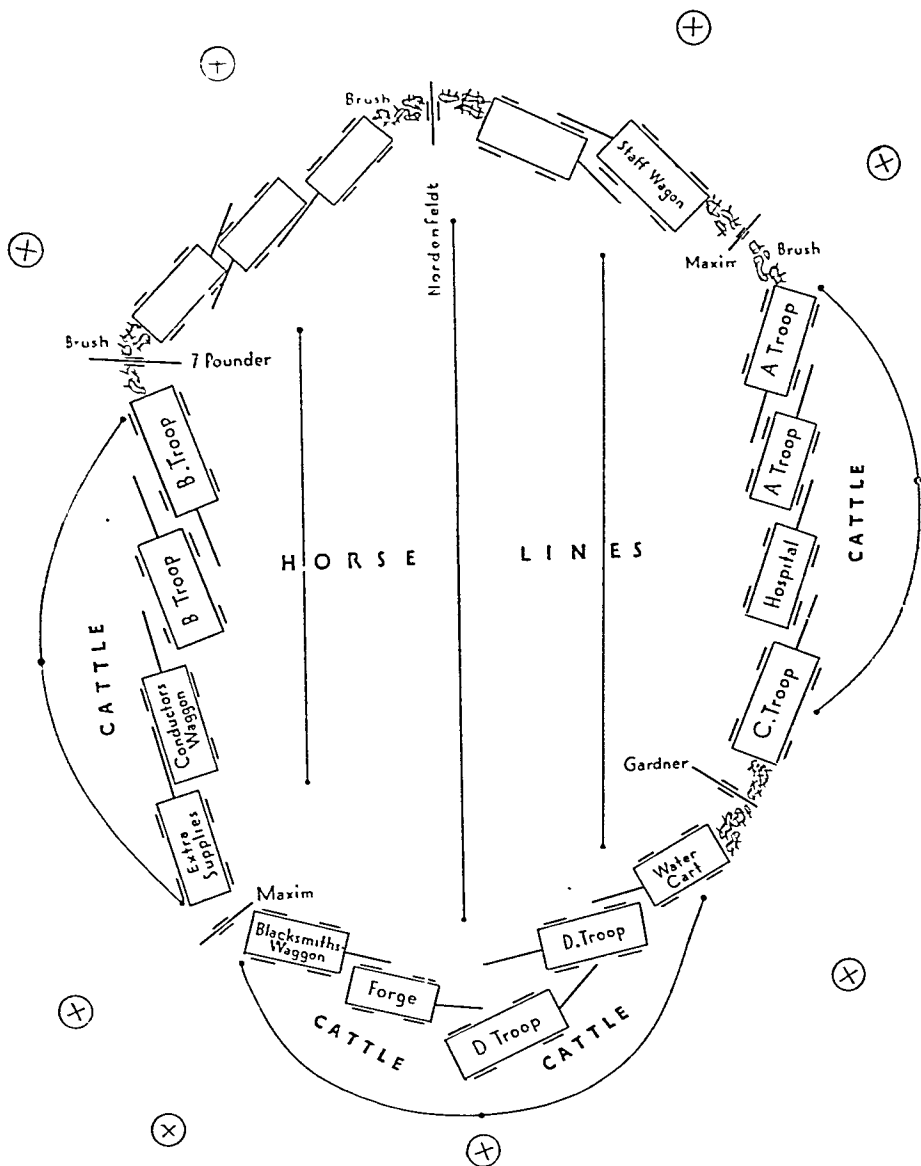
wished to do so—have privileges which the troopers did not have. What splendid fellows they all were! What a privilege to have served with, spoken to and fought beside such men!

I felt that with such marksmen as we had—men who had lived half their lives with rifles in their hands—plus the Maxims which we had with us—we would give the Matabele impis something to think about. There was only one thing that worried me as a transport-rider—and I knew the same was in the minds of the leaders—this was that the Matabele would all fall back before our advance, take to the thick bush and take up some strong position in it, out of which we should not be able to move them before the start of the rainy season. Should this take place it would be serious for many reasons. Transport would get bogged, oxen would fall sick and serious illness would break out amongst the troops.

On leaving Charter, laager was formed regularly and a special formation was used, very simple (*see illustration*) but one that could be formed with great rapidity either on the march in case of a sudden attack, or when we formed laager on our nightly outspan. On test these laagers were formed in five minutes at night and in four minutes at outspan from column of march.

All men and horses found ample room inside this formation; oxen were picketed outside the waggons; on either side and rear. Each driver had two three-foot steel posts, which he drove in the ground immediately his waggon was in its place; he unhooked his span of





## Formation of Night Laager SALISBURY COLUMN

(X) Outlying Pickets

oxen, took them clear of the waggons and as soon as his side was completed, fastened his trek-tow down to the steel posts and tied his oxen to it, facing each other, so that when frightened by an attack, they would pull against each other, and so would not be able to break loose. The oxen when tethered, would at once crowd close up to the waggons, making a most efficient obstacle to any enemy trying to get into the laager. In the bush country another five minutes had to be added to the time for laagering, caused by the making of the thorn bush scherms or fences. Each waggon was manned with eight men, the others being held in a reserve to supply reinforcements at any point necessary. All the natives with the column were armed as were the drivers, leaders and personal servants. Here are two things I think worth recording; only one native was found drunk—he had stolen some rum—during the whole of the time; the other is—I am certain I am correct in this last statement—that every native with the column kept awake from midnight to after day-break from fear of Matabele attacks. My, how these “boys” feared the Matabele, yet they fought bravely enough when they had whites with them!

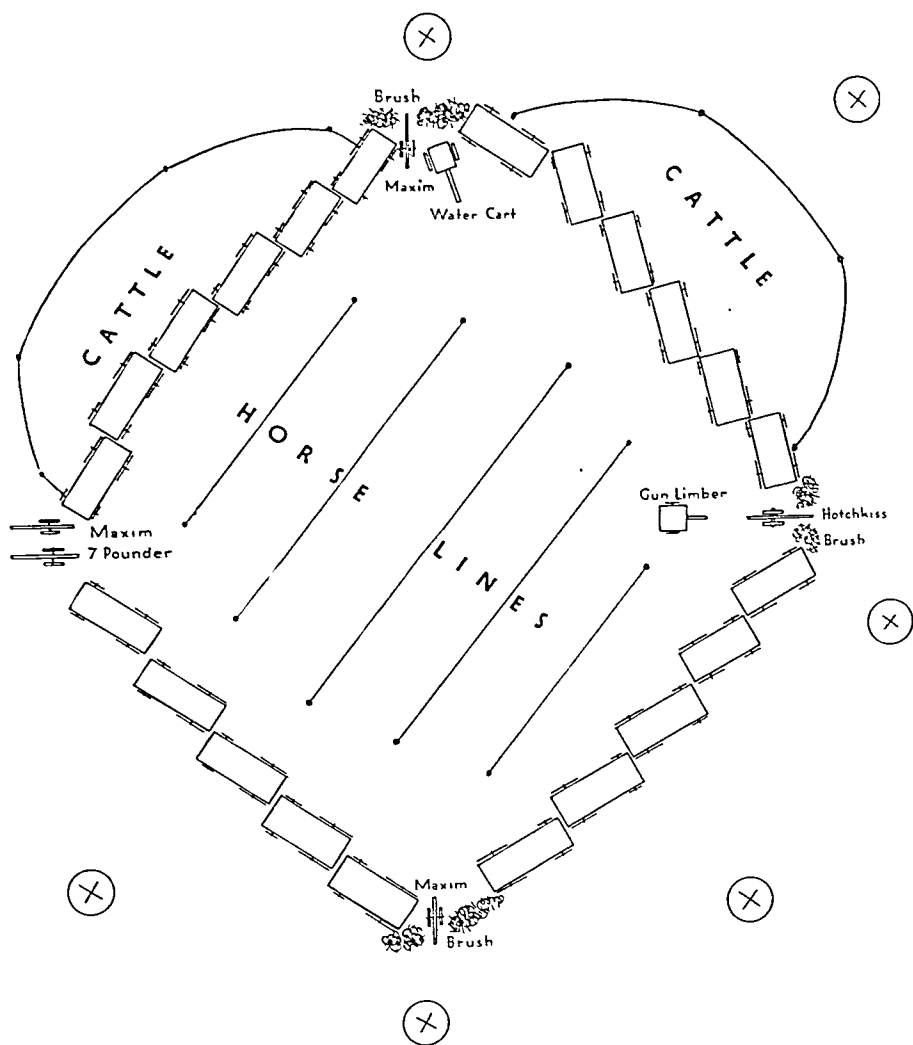
On leaving Charter, we followed the alternative road from Salisbury to Bulawayo, for about thirty miles, but the going was terribly bad and though the waggons were very lightly loaded—they had on them less than five thousand pounds—they sank deep in the soft sand and time after time double spans had to be hitched on to pull them out.

A few days later we came to the Umniati River, the

boundary between Mashonaland and Matabeleland. Here at the drift, which was a bad one for crossing, we might have had a bad time had the Matabele attacked us. We saw a few of their men in the distance but we were allowed to cross unmolested.

Close to the kraal of a Mashona chief named Indiamia, we captured two hundred head of Matabele cattle. Here we lost our first man, a Captain Campbell, who was shot in the thigh by a slug from an old musket. This shattered his thigh bone. The leg had to be amputated, but he died shortly after the operation. On the morning of the sixteenth, we were joined by the Victoria column under Major Wilson; 464 white men, 250 horses, 50 native drivers and 400 Mashonas under Captain Jack Brabant. What a wild and likeable devil Jack was, and what hell he raised during the Boer War. He drove some of the hide-bound regulars to the verge of madness, but he was a fine guerilla leader.

The Victoria column had four galloping Maxims, one seven-pounder and a Hotchkiss one-pounder. Of the men two hundred and fifty had bayonets and the column had eighteen waggons as their transport. Their laager was formed in a slightly different shape to ours, better I thought in some respects. It was in the shape of a diamond (*see illustration*) and from this time on the two columns kept close to each other but formed separate laagers and each found their own guards, pickets and other details. The Salisbury column was on the right and the Victoria on the left, each throwing out a flanking party of one full troop,



# Night Laager of **VICTORIA & SOUTHERN** **COLUMN** When Advancing

(X) Outlying Pickets

## AFRICAN ODYSSEY

each column taking it in turn to provide either the rear guard or advance guard.

On the west bank of the Tyabenzi River we laagered and rested for one day as the Victoria trek oxen were in bad shape. In the morning I had gone out scouting with a man named Burdett and two "boys"; we had found a small deserted Mashona kraal and Burdett had wandered off on his own when several shots were fired from a nearby kopje and Burdett fell badly wounded. He had one wound from what looked like buck-shot in the thick part of his leg but a horrible wound in the chest from a piece of old iron which had evidently gone through one of his lungs. I set fire to the kraal, got him on his horse with the assistance of the "boys", then with one of us on each side of him, holding him in the saddle, a volley of slugs whistling round our heads, we made for the laager, but Burdett was dead by the time we reached it.

On the 24th, we formed laager on the banks of the Shangaani River. Now a double one was made, the two being side by side and linked up by a high scherm of thorn bushes.

At four o'clock the next morning, firing opened all around us, then came the roar of the charging impi. I jumped for my waggon but for a time could not make out anything except the flashes. Suddenly the roar died down and then there was utter stillness. Quested, who commanded a "Cape Boys' " Corps of auxiliaries came in wounded in the arm and side from assegais, and reported that he had lost several of his men. The whole thing was over in less than half an

hour, evidently a feint to try us out and see if we were prepared.

What was known as the battle of the Shangaani River was fought on October 25th. It opened with an attack of about two thousand Matabele charging from the west (Salisbury) front; these were heavily shelled from the Salisbury laager with the Hotchkiss one-pounder and a withering rifle fire poured into them by the troops. This smashed their attack and they retired. They came on a second and then a third time, at each attack receiving terrible punishment. Their bravery was really superb.

I watched almost fascinated, as the impi charged over the rise for the last attack, their shields held in front of them (poor devils, they thought they would be some protection) and their assegais waving above their heads. Then our volleys rang out and the ranks seemed to melt away, crumbling up in confusion. Then they came on after a slight pause, like a long wave on the sea shore which was gradually expending itself.

Volley after volley ploughed them, and the ground in our direct front was black with their falling bodies, many writhing in their agony. Screams of rage and pain answered our fire. Heroic but so futile, the nearest man of those that had fallen was less than twenty feet from the waggons.

When they were finally driven back from the attack on the west or Salisbury side of the laager, it was thought that they had had enough and retired; mounted parties were sent out to scout and report.

The troop from the Victoria laager found a few Matabele in the bush and dispersed these, pursuing them and killing several. I went out with Captain Heaney's troop but we found none of the enemy within a distance of two miles. We had just got to a ridge visible from the laager, Heaney had given the order to dismount and engage a large body of the enemy which we now saw in the distance from the ridge, when we were attacked on both flanks by large forces, trying to cut us off. They had got close to us in the bush when they commenced firing—what a godsend to us, were the old muskets and Martini-Henry rifles which the Matabele owned; if they had only depended solely on their natural weapon, the assegai, what a different tale might have been told. We retired in half troops, then halted in an open laagte (small valley). Now not more than two hundred yards from us, we saw large bodies of the enemy all round us.

Someone yelled out: "Here they come," and suddenly the whole bush was alive with the gleaming bodies of the Matabele warriors coming on in a scattered half circle, leaping and bounding as if to disconcert our aim, and all the time bent low behind their shields. Crash, crash went two volleys. That made them slow up a bit. Then followed a continuous rattle of independent firing and they dropped rapidly.

Captain Heaney gave the order to charge at a trot, then at the gallop and we were at and into them. A sort of wild *mêlée* into which I cannot say that I went with any great amount of enthusiasm. Things were

certainly more than lively. A trooper beside me dropped with an assegai between his shoulders. The small impi closed round us and it was now a matter of cutting our way through. I saw one man—quite a youngster, halt his horse and grab a chum as he was slipping from his saddle; fling the man across in front of him and then shoot his way through with his revolver in one hand and his other holding the man on. We broke through but Captain Heaney, who did a dozen gallant actions, had two horses killed under him. We got back to the laager with a loss of eight men killed and every horse had one or more assegai wounds.

The attack on the Victoria laager had been much more determined and here some of the Matabele warriors—one cannot but say what gallant devils they were—had actually got right up to the waggons and been shot there, but not a single one of the enemy had got into the laager.

I learnt from a wounded Matabele captain, that the attack had been made by the Insuk-ameni, Ihlati, Amaveni and Seseba impis; more than seven thousand men in all. This large force had been waiting for us in the Samabula forest; we had passed them before they knew it, they had then followed us and hoped to catch us at the Shangaani river drift. Again they had missed us and it was by their stumbling on the pickets of Quested's "Cape Boys'" Corps and thus giving the alarm, that we had been saved from an attack on all sides, just at dawn.

The wounded captain was an officer of the Insuka-



meni impi which had made three such gallant charges, as heroic as any regiment in a white army. He said that the izinduna (head induna) in command had given explicit orders to all, to attack us just after we had broken laager and started to inspan; but his orders had been disobeyed by two of the umfane impi (impis of young untried warriors). He estimated their losses at five hundred, but from what I saw after riding only along the front of the Salisbury laager, I should say that there must have been quite seven hundred on that front alone.

Many of the wounded killed themselves with their own assegais rather than be taken prisoner; whilst I saw several others fling themselves into the river. The captain said the force was certain to attack us again, and next time it would be when we were on the march.

Our losses had not been heavy; five white men killed, fourteen wounded. Forty-eight of Qustedt's "Cape Boys" killed and about the same number wounded; when these men had been rushed, the Matabele had killed what women and children they could. Some hours after the attack I came on five dead women and three wounded, with eight dead children, all lying in a thick clump of bushes.

The fight had done a lot of good, it shook the men into a good fighting unit; a corps who had now fought shoulder to shoulder, and had gained confidence in their officers and better still in their leader, Major Forbes.

The next night—as can be imagined—all were on

the alert, nervous would be nearer the mark. Special care was taken that night with the laager, which was strengthened at every point possible and the scherms (fences) made thicker and higher than usual. I cannot speak for others, but I know that I had many visions of an overwhelming force of the enemy sweeping over the waggons and wiping us out.

About two in the morning, some fool, as bad and as nervous as myself, fired off his rifle and in a second every man turned out, manned his waggon, or went to his reserve station but not another shot was fired from the laagers. The men were as steady as rocks and waited orders like veterans. We stood-to after that until daybreak.

The next day we laagered close to a small river and near the site of a big kraal which had been burnt to the ground. Major Forbes was told that not far away was the large military kraal of Jingen, deserted now, but with many large grain bins, all of which were full.

When the laager inspanned the next day, Captain Heaney and half his troop—to which I was still attached—was sent to destroy this kraal. It was just before noon when we started. We were twenty-five men in all, with a Captain Finch as second-in-command. We found the kraal—a very large and well-built one—about eighteen miles distant, and set fire to all the huts and the stockade. Whilst doing this one of our scouts rode up and stated that from a high kopje, he had spotted three large bodies of the enemy coming down on us. Captain Heaney immediately

gave the command to retire on the column, sending one man on in advance to warn Major Forbes.

We galloped off at a fast clip, but now luck seemed against us, two horses put their feet in ant-bear holes and rolled with their riders. These were able to scramble up behind other men. Immediately after this two more horses came down and broke their legs. Now we had four horses with double loads, a man was ordered to ride as fast as he could to the column and get help. At this point bodies of the enemy were close on all sides. They soon closed in on us, I had a quick, glancing vision of the head and shoulders of a great brute, as he drew back his hand with an assegai in it, ready to hurl it at me; then the startled look on his face, the roll of his white eyeballs, as a bullet from my revolver hit him in the chest and he fell back with a crash.

From all sides more and more Matabele seemed to spring up and I thanked my lucky stars that I had been one of the few to secure a sword for I had to use it then. The Matabele hated what they called our "long knives". The "whig-e-e-e-e" of slugs from old muskets sounded on all sides but these were mostly high over our heads.

The situation was now serious for us. Luckily every man there had a cool head, was a fine shot and a good horseman. The Matabele were paying heavily and every shot was telling; unluckily we had lost five men out of our small force almost at the start. At last we drove them off and got a breathing spell. Dismounting, we took cover behind some rocks and were able to

form a ring behind these. For half an hour the Matabele contented themselves with sniping at us but not registering a single hit, then came another charge of glistening bodies, waving shields and assegais. The air was rent with their war-cries and—a ringing cheer, the tat-tat-tat-tat of a Maxim gun and a rescue party of thirty charged, led by the Hon. M. Gifford.

A loud cheer—mostly of relief—from all of us, greeted the rescue party and as the enemy drew off we mounted and made our way back to the column. Out of the twenty-five who had started that morning, ten were dead and eight wounded.

Soon after our arrival at the column, a scouting party commanded by Captain Williams and consisting of eight men came in. They had been cut off by a considerable body of the enemy, but managed to gallop through, running the gauntlet though, of a heavy fire, at a range of a hundred yards. Captain Williams in some way got detached from his party and was never seen again. Some fine deeds were done in this affair. A man named Lucas had a Matabele jump up on the back of his horse—a favourite trick of theirs—pull him off and stab him several times with his spear, luckily a throwing one. Lucas received eight wounds in the arms, thighs, and one in the side.

A trooper named Halfort saw this and rode back to Lucas, shot five Matabele with his revolver, got Lucas across his horse and brought him in.

Major Forbes now called for volunteers to go with Captain Heaney and burn the great kraal of Enxna

which one of Quested's "Cape Boy" scouts had reported as deserted. Eight volunteers including myself went with Captain Heaney and we found the great kraal quite empty, set it on fire and brought back eighty head of splendid cattle. We also got news of poor Captain Williams from a wounded Matabele whom we got on our way back.

It seemed from what we could gather, that his horse had run away with him after having had an assegai plunged into its rump and sticking there. The Matabele had detached a force to follow him; at last his horse failing, getting weaker and weaker, he took refuge behind some rocks.

The Matabele twice charged at him but he drove them back with rifle and revolver fire; he had a splendid magazine rifle, one of the few in the country at that time, and made great work with it, dropping several of the warriors as they dodged from bush to bush. Sitting calmly behind his rock, he never allowed a man to show himself, but in the end he was shot in the head by a slug—a chance shot. Captain Williams had been a captain in the Horse Guards and had come out to "see the show".

## CHAPTER TEN

ON the twenty-ninth of October we laagered between two streams, having seen no Matabele. Next day we were to march at noon but a scout from ahead came back, sent by Captain White, reporting large forces of the Matabele five miles in front.

Captain White was watching their movements and reckoned the force to be six thousand or more. Just at the place where we were there was thick bush running to the foot of some kopjes which were fifteen hundred yards distant to our direct front. We soon after saw a very large force of the enemy come through a nek in the kopjes and another force marching along the ridge. Captain Lundy of the Victoria column was ordered to open fire with his seven-pounder and two shells falling amongst the enemy on the ridge, they scattered and dropped behind the line of kopjes for cover and we had no further trouble from them for three days.

On the morning of November 1st there was such a heavy rain that we dared not inspan until nearly noon; by this time the scouts had reported the country clear and we advanced to a large bushy basin in which the Imbembesi River rises.

During the march our three best scouts, Burnham,

Ingram and Vavasour returned ; they had been away a week trying to get close to Bulawayo. They had learnt that the King had left there but they had not been able to get any word of the Tuli column.

It had been bitterly cold when we started, so much so that twenty-eight of our trek-oxen had to be left on the ground and five horses from one troop had been lost the previous day. Orders had just been issued for a troop of the "Cape Boys' " Corps to go back for these, when a large body of natives was seen coming out of the bush and making for the direction of Bulawayo. Again the seven-pounder shelled them, the range being about a mile.

A picket now came galloping in to report, and at the same time I saw the whole bush to my front swarming with Matabele. The buglers immediately sounded the alarm, the laagers were manned and the battle of Imbembesi had started.

The attack at this time was entirely on the right face—the Salisbury laager. The enemy had intended to surround us, those which had been seen on the left front should have attacked on that side but were driven back by the Maxims of the Victoria laager. The horses and oxen which were being watered at the time, had been sent for at the sounding of the alarm and the horses came galloping up when the fight was at its height.

As they arrived some "boys" ran out to turn them in to the laager, causing them to stampede ; off they went hell-for-leather right for the enemy's lines. Now a fine thing was done by Captain Burrows and a pal of mine

saw exactly the same thing later on in the Zulu rebellion.

Now our guns and Maxims played on them and a hundred dismounted men were sent to clear the bush to our right front with B Troop under Captain Burrows to support them and prevent them from being cut off. Another troop under Captain Bustard was ordered to charge some of the enemy in a small laagte (valley). Little opposition was met and these troops soon returned to the laager.

From a badly wounded man we learned of the impis who had attacked us and he told us that in reserve there had been the N'Gobo and Godhwayo, Umsingweni and Umswanansi impis. The Imbezu and the Ingubu impis had suffered terribly. This Matabele officer reckoned that the first—the Imbezu—impi had lost two-thirds of their number. I was watching this man closely while he was speaking and I marvelled at his indifference and perfect calmness. Yet, for all he knew we might have been going to shoot him after he had finished telling us what we wanted to know. Merciless, cruel and savage they might have been, but I do not think anyone questioned their bravery.

He went on to tell us that they had a hundred rifles as good as ours, and an ample supply of ammunition, but that few of them know how to use the arms given them. Major Forbes later ascertained that the Ingubu lost 800 killed and wounded out of a total of 1,050 men. The Matabele admitted that they had been fairly beaten; they tried, he said, to attack us on the trek,



following us for four days but never once got a chance to do so. The Salisbury losses were five killed, fourteen wounded. The Victoria losses were one killed and seven wounded.

The whole force was delighted and amazed when they realized that they had met and thrashed the pick of Lobengula's impis. Again, I cannot but help feeling for the poor devils. They had tried to pit flesh and blood against shot and shell. Once more I felt that had they stuck to the arms which made the Zulu nation and their own—the assegais—and not fooled with rifles, there might have been another tale told.

The next day—our scouts reporting all clear—we broke laager about ten and advanced in four columns of waggons abreast; the natives and “boys” marched between the waggon columns; and there were large mounted parties on each of our flanks, also in the rear and in advance.

On the fourth of November, Fred Burnham and two scouts were sent to see if they could reach Bulawayo. As we were crossing a small river—I think one named the Kossi—we heard a terrific explosion in the direction of the King's kraal. Later a message came to the column from Burnham, saying that Bulawayo had been blown up, and set on fire in a dozen places. This took place exactly a month from the day we had left Charter.

The next day we came to the Umguzu river, and close to the drift at which we crossed—a very bad one—saw the great artificial pool in which King Lobengula preserved his sacred crocodiles; these were fed

with the men and women Lobengula had sentenced to death, who were flung to these loathsome brutes. We flung them something that finished them for ever; sticks of dynamite.

Outside Bulawayo we came across the kraal of Colenbrander and everything here had been left intact, huts, grain bins, kraals and animals, not a thing had been molested or damaged in any way. By special orders of the King, when Bulawayo was burnt, not a single white man's hut was touched. The explosion had been caused by the fire getting at 100,000 rounds of ammunition and 2,000 pounds of black powder.

Burnham now made one of his famous rides. Major Forbes and Dr. Jameson wanted Cecil Rhodes to know what had happened up to this time, so Burnham was sent off with dispatches. He rode to Tati, a distance of one hundred and twenty miles through enemy country, from Tati he started for Palapye, a distance of two hundred and forty miles, doing this last part of the journey in wonderful time; enabling the news of the smashing of the Matabele military power to reach England on November 10th.

Next day I went through what had been Bulawayo; around the King's own kraal, which was entirely destroyed, I saw hundreds of cartridges of all sorts, old rifles, loading machines and beads; these all fused by the terrific heat from the straw huts.

Five of our men who had died were buried and given a very impressive funeral. On the 7th, we received the first news from the third column. This

was now sixty miles away and some of our oxen were sent to help them as they reported that their beasts were in poor condition from sickness.

Three "Cape Boys" who volunteered for the work were now sent to Lobengula with a letter which was written in English, Dutch and Zulu. This letter was written by Dr. Jameson asking King Lobengula to avoid further bloodshed and to come in to an indaba (conference), guaranteeing him safe conduct and safe return on its conclusion.

These messengers returned from the King with the answer: "I will come and talk to you later."

These "Cape Boys" reported that the Imbezu and Ingubu impis—or what remained of them—did not want to fight any more, but that the Insuka-meni, Inhlati, Seseba and some umfane impis, were anxious to try conclusions with us in the bush. These impis, however, had hardly been engaged so far. They also reported that Umjaan, the chief induna and commander of the Imbezu impi, said that the warriors were all badly frightened by the Maxims and the seven-pounder gun with its shells, looking upon these as umlungu abagati—white man's magic.

As the King had not put in an appearance by the end of five days, and no word had been received from him, Dr. Jameson now decided that he must be followed, captured and his remaining impis dispersed. The first thing was the King's capture as then he might be persuaded to order his impis to come in to one great indaba, and if this could be done, it would undoubtedly end all resistance.

interrogated separately, both gave the same information. That the King was going down the Bubyce river to the Shangaani; that he had only a small force with him but a very large number of women and children, also a large number of cattle—not trek oxen. The men with the King were from the two finest impis, the Imbezu and the Ingubu, and the old induna said that these would undoubtedly fight as long as the King ordered them to do so.

Major Forbes sent several Matabele away as messengers to the King and the indunas with him. They were to say that Major Forbes would follow the King day and night, until he captured him, but that he would suffer no harm and no more of his people would be killed unless the column was attacked.

By now there was considerable dissatisfaction among the men at going so far into the enemy's country with such a small force. As already mentioned, the men were in bad shape from privations, weather and shortness of rations. This discontent finally reached the ears of the Major, being brought to his attention by Commandant Raaf who was of the same opinion as the majority of the men. Major Forbes now showed that he knew how to handle Colonial troops. Most Imperial officers would have had serious trouble on their hands, but he knew his men.

A parade was called—no reason being given—and as the Chartered Company had totally failed to fulfil their side of the contract—which was to provide ample supplies and transportation—they were told

that the men could go on or go back, whichever they wished.

At least two-thirds were for going back, but most of the officers wished to go on. Major Forbes now said that he would keep to his word and take the force back. Two small attacks were made on the laager and this delayed the retirement for a few days. Then a man of the Imbezu impi came in and reported that there were large forces of the enemy all round us.

Two days after, we moved off and laagered near the river with thick bush all around. The next day we started on our trek back; two days after we were at Umhlangeni. Word came here to Major Forbes from Dr. Jameson, saying that Captain Napier was coming to his relief with a large force and waggon transport, more ammunition and food supplies. Also that he wished him to capture the King at all costs, as this would end all resistance before the rainy season started. An advance body of well-mounted men were coming on ahead under the command of Captain Burrows; with him was the Cape Boy, John Jacobs, King Lobengula's clerk. This man was a mission educated half-breed; a nasty, crooked, double-dyed little villain, who was supposed to guide us to the King.

John Jacobs had escaped from Lobengula a week or two previously and knew where he was in hiding. Captain Burrows arrived a few hours after the messenger, reporting that all was quiet around Bulawayo and that he had not seen any large number of the Matabele. Also that several great chiefs had come in and surrendered.

On November 25th, thirty-five hundred head of cattle were sent off to Bulawayo under Jack Brabant and his "boys". Now the rains started and it poured for hours on end. In fact the rain lasted until we got to our destination which was Shiloh—a deserted mission station. Wet, miserable and unable to get fires going, we laagered, and an hour afterwards were joined by Captain Napier and his reinforcements. He had with him two hundred and fifty picked men, all volunteers. Wonder of wonders, he had brought enough brandy to enable each man to have half a tin cup as a ration, and this saved many from fever.

Captain Napier formed a separate laager for his men. He had ten waggons with him and all his trek oxen were in splendid shape, except two spans. That night the rain came down in torrents again. I never felt more miserable or more done up. Rest was impossible and the poor animals—oxen, mules and horses—seemed so weak that I thought we should lose half of them.

The next day Major Forbes made up a force of volunteers, consisting of three hundred men with fourteen days' supplies. Four light waggons, two galloping Maxims and two more Maxims on waggons. Also a Hotchkiss gun which was with Captain Napier. Major Wilson was to be second-in-command, while Captain Burrows commanded the Salisbury contingent. Poor Burrows was one of the handsomest men I have seen. He was always well dressed and had thick dark hair, a long curling moustache—as worn in those days—fine eyes, and a good, firm, fighting chin. He

was just under thirty when he met his heroic end on December 4th, 1893.

The next morning we started out, my old captain, Heaney going back in charge of the waggons and the men wishing to return to Bulawayo. I went on with Forbes, now attached to B Troop which was commanded by Captain Burrows.

We struck the trail of the King close to Shiloh, and then followed it through thick bush for twenty miles. The going was too awful for words. The bush was simply one immense swamp from the heavy rains which had fallen. We finally laagered at a small river which was nearly overflowing its banks. On our way we had passed several large scherms where Lobengula and his party had laagered.

Another messenger now arrived from Dr. Jameson impressing on Major Forbes how urgent it was that King Lobengula should be captured and saying that he was sending under heavy escort, more supplies to the Shangaani. The letter went on to say that he had definite information that the King was very ill and now almost deserted.

The rain was now continuous day after day and the storms as bad as I had ever seen, even for Africa. We were now doing less than ten miles a day, owing to the bad going and the fact that the animals were getting worn out.

Two more nights of torrential rain and then Major Forbes, finding that the trek oxen could hardly be got up and that many of them were very ill, decided to leave the waggons behind; we could never catch the

came in and surrendered, they also would be given paper with writing on it which would protect them, their wives, their children and cattle. If, however, they went on fighting, then they would lose everything.

Stringent orders were now issued that all wounded or prisoners should be well treated and then released, and that all natives should be left unmolested unless they showed fight. If we attacked forces of the enemy and forced a fight on them, we should get men wounded, which would hamper us, and the news of our fighting would only urge the King on and make him travel faster.

The next morning I was sent on under a Captain Fitzgerald after a party we had seen the night before, just as we outspanned. We were to take whatever cattle they had as a punishment for not coming in after they had been warned to do so. We finally came up with them, and without any fight they gave up eighty-five oxen and about two hundred goats, all being in very poor condition.

Continuing from here, we passed many small parties of Matabele living in scherms, but all were delighted when they found we did not molest them or take their cattle.

We had been hot on the King's spoor all this time. He had gone straight through the bush, driving his great waggons over everything except the largest trees. Two of his waggons we passed. They had been abandoned and set fire to, but were only partly consumed. Close to one of them was the bath-chair



he used so much when he was ill. It struck me as a pathetic sight. Poor hunted devil.

All this time the weather had been getting worse and worse. Now we found a place where the King's last three waggons had separated, and we had a lot of trouble in placing the correct spoor to follow, only to find after following it a few miles, that they had only parted to avoid some swampy ground. Now the spoor ran to the banks of a swift-flowing river and in the edge of the bush which bordered it we came on a scherm of the King, quite recently vacated.

Several anxious days now passed. Major Forbes and Captain Wilson wisely kept most things to themselves, but through Commandant Raaf, who was always talking, we junior officers learnt that these two were considerably worried, and that they knew a force of at least 3,000 to 4,000 Matabele might attack us at any moment. Anyhow, we were well prepared, and could not have had two better men in command.

We all knew and had seen in the great fight at Imbembesi, that the Matabele could not stand up against our fire, so the column pushed on as fast as it could, but at every moment, day and night, the greatest possible care was taken, and the column was ready to form battle order at a second's notice.

Crossing a high ridge one day, we came into the valley of the Lupani. That afternoon we entered the endless bush again. Now, the whole time, an advance guard of only four men was kept not more than five hundred yards in front of the column, flankers the

King if we took them with us. Two hundred and fifty men were picked out and the very best of the horses, the rest being sent back to Bulawayo with the wagons.

On the twenty-ninth of November we crossed the Imbembesi and laagered on the far side; in the afternoon we did another ten miles and then laagered at a freshly burnt kraal. On the thirtieth before coming to the place where we laagered for the night, we had to go down a very steep kloof which opened into a wide valley. We should have been wiped out if the enemy had attacked us here. I had a nasty fall, my horse slipped going down the high muddy bank, fell to his knees, then rolled completely over with me under him.

Day after day we had been close behind the King. Every day now there was rain, lightning and thunder such as Europe never experiences. We all suffered and were getting in bad shape. Many of the men—tough as they were and inured to hardship of all kinds—were getting ill and worn out. I never remember such continuously bad weather. I was never dry, the rain ran down my back, through my breeches and out of my boots. All our horses began to get saddle galls and were growing very weak.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

NEXT day, when scouting, I ran across an induna lying in the grass. This man had a slight wound in the fleshy part of the calf just bad enough to cripple him. With the assistance of the men—taking it in turns to ride a few miles behind each—I got him to the column. This man told Major Forbes that he had left the King at the Shangaani, that he had a very small number of men actually with him, but that small parties of several impis were in the vicinity of the royal scherm guarding him; that it was only a few of the umfane impis such as the Ihlati, Seseba, Ingubu and Indhlovo who wished to continue fighting. That all the other impis, even the Imbezu, were tired of trekking and were slowly breaking up into small parties and going back to their kraals.

He also stated that they were almost all half-starved and that there was a severe epidemic of smallpox amongst them. His own men were from the kraals around Bulawayo, and all wanted to go home. They felt it hopeless to fight against the magic guns that went tat-tat-tat-tat, and never stopped—(the Maxims).

Major Forbes had this man given medical attention and then despatched him back to his people with a signed permit. He was to tell all he met that, if they

same, and a rear guard of six. Between all these were connecting files. One of the Maxims was at the head of the column and the other at the rear. The men marched in sections, and on an alarm the column was to form laager at once.

Though the bush was very thick, yet most of the time it was possible to see for a good four hundred yards or more in any direction. This would have given us a good five minutes—ample time in which to form laager. I had been doing rearguard that day, and had been warned by Major Wilson to see that the men were extra careful as the O.C. expected an attack any time now.

We now came to another rather high and broken ridge, and just as the scouts topped it, they spotted natives and sent back reporting this. Almost as the man arrived at the column, a shot was heard on our left flank. Laager was formed, but scouts could not find any trace of the enemy except on our right front where they discovered a large scherm recently vacated.

Burnham and Colenbrander later captured a young Matabele warrior who reported that the King's camp was not far ahead, that the King had been there that afternoon—three hours previously—that his waggons had stuck in the mud, and that he had ridden off to a new camp leaving them to follow.

He said that the King did not want to fight, but that he had sent his eldest son, Mnyamandi, to Dr. Jameson the day previously, with a message saying that he was coming to Bulawayo to see the Doctor.

The column now continued to advance in square formation. Soon we came on the King's last camp and a lot of Matabele who cleared off as fast as they could go. One boy was captured by myself and three of my men. We took him to Major Forbes; he told the Major that the King had left only a couple of hours previously.

The column, in square formation, was only advancing very slowly, and Major Forbes now sent for Major Alan Wilson, telling him to take fifty men, push on as fast as he could, and try to discover which way the King's spoor lay. Wilson was told to be certain to return in an hour when it would be dark and laager formed.

Major Wilson took forty-five men only, as several officers wished to go. These included Captains Kirton and Greenfield. Burnham and Ingram did not go with him at this time, they were still at the King's huts in his last scherm. Major Forbes, hearing of this, sent for them, ordering them to go to Wilson at once.

The column now formed laager about five hundred yards from the river bank in fairly open ground. During the evening when we watered our stock, we plainly heard Matabele across the river, building scherms.

Now a young warrior was brought into the camp by a man Major Wilson had sent back. This Matabele was the oldest son of Magweke, the chief commander of the Bulawayo kraal and a man of the greatest importance. He told us that there were 5,000 men with

the King beside the Seseba and Ihlati impis, and that the indunas Manyon and Gambo were also there. He said that the King's leg was so swollen and painful with gout that he was hardly able to move.

All these reports seemed to square with each other and there was no doubt that the King had large forces round him, but did they or did they not want to fight? Events were now moving to a climax, for an hour later another Matabele came in, reporting that one large impi made up of contingents from others, and under the command of the great induna Umjar, Commander of the Imbezu, the King's Guards, was advancing, with orders from the King to attack us and stamp us out.

He told us that the last of the gallant Imbezu were in this impi, that it was 3,800 strong, and that it had been "doctored" with strong mouti the day before. He also said that now the only men left with the King were some old indunas and about five hundred Bovani, an impi made up of Mashonas, Maholi, Malakas and inferior tribes, and useless as a fighting unit.

All details were ordered to stand to and the Maxims manned, the night pickets and sentries doubled and scouts sent out around the laager. It was now dark, and raining, and Major Wilson had not returned. By midnight it was raining in torrents. Just before this, two men had come in from Major Wilson reporting that he was going on and intended to sleep out, that he would like a few more men for reinforcements, and that the column could easily follow the spoor, that he

heard that the King had very few men with him and that he was going in to capture him.

Very few men slept in the laager that night. I know I did not for one. Anyhow, I was so wet, cold and miserable that I wanted to move about to keep warm. Rockets were kept handy—and dry—and all expected an attack in force at any moment.

Morning came, and Captain Napier and a trooper came back from Major Wilson saying that he was still on the spoor, had crossed the river ten miles down and ridden up to a scherm the other side. Apparently, from a native—a Mashona—he had learnt that the King was only a short distance ahead of him, and that the impi had gone back to attack us. He had now passed five large scharms in quick succession and Captain Napier said that each one had only just been vacated. At the sixth—a very large and strong scherm—they had found a body of armed Matabele; Wilson had retired without firing a shot and taken up his position in a large deserted scherm which he had passed previously.

Captain Burrows was now sent on to Major Wilson with twenty-six well-mounted men as reinforcements. I tried my hardest to get permission to go as I dearly wanted to be in at the King's capture—for that matter so did every man there—I could not wangle it, so was left behind—to live.

I was standing behind Major Forbes when he gave Captain Burrows his orders. He asked Burrows if each man had his full hundred rounds of ammunition and his revolver with forty rounds. The Captain said he

had personally inspected each man, and that they had. They left us just before midday, Major Forbes' last words being: "Tell the Major I will move as soon and as fast as I can, that I am surrounded by heavy forces and that he must use his own discretion."

Just as the column moved off, two hours later, we heard heavy firing across the river where the King was, and this lasted for about fifteen minutes. The column now advanced along the track of the King's waggons in the closest formation it could move in; its right towards the river, the two Maxims on its left flank. I was riding well out on the left flank with my scouts, about a thousand yards from the column, when we were threatened by an attack from about one hundred Matabele, but these eventually retired. I sent in and reported this to the column. The column continued along a valley for a mile, then turned sharply towards the river through some open land, keeping close to the river bank which was very high. We no sooner got into the low scrub than a heavy fire was opened on us.

In some thick mimosa bush the enemy seemed to be in great force, and their fire was soon heavy from all directions except our rear. This fire was the best directed I had seen up to this time. One man of ours was killed, nine slightly wounded and four mules killed and one horse. The Major gave the order to retire.

Immediately we started to do this, a furious charge was made on our front and left flank, and for the first time the Matabele got up to the column and hand to



hand fighting took place. We drove them off, but now lost another three men killed and five wounded. I got a nasty blow on my thigh from a kerrie stick which caused my leg to swell so much I could hardly sit my horse.

Laager was soon formed again and the wounded men attended to by Dr. Hogg.

While we were retiring, Burnham, Ingram and Gooding rode up from Major Wilson. I heard the message given, and was amazed.

"Major Forbes," Burnham said, "I am sorry to say that I am sure that we three are the sole survivors of the party of Major Wilson and Captain Burrows." Major Forbes said: "Thank you, Burnham. Say nothing to anyone for the present," then addressing me: "Of course you will keep quiet also."

I saluted and said: "Of course, sir."

All the while we had been fighting, I had heard steady firing from the direction of Major Wilson's party. Several of us agreed that it seemed to get fainter, as if going farther away and farther from the river.

The river was much too high now to cross. We remained laagered all that day and night, hoping against hope that some of Wilson's party might have got away.

F. Burnham's written account of the famous Shangaani river fight—known throughout South Africa as "Wilson's Last Stand"—is as follows:

"On December 3rd, Major Forbes said to me: 'I want you to go with Wilson, take my horse.' I did so

instantly, and joined Wilson just as his lead horses splashed across the Shangaani, then a shallow stream six inches deep. . . . It was now dark, and one could see many fires around us.

"Wilson gave the order to gallop . . . we were soon among the astonished natives. There we were in the midst of their regiment—the very audacity of our demands made the chiefs hesitate to fire.

"Wilson shouted again: 'Where is your King?' . . . the Matabele were all around in thousands. . . .

"At last our guide said, 'the King is here.'

"Out of the darkness loomed a circular enclosure . . . as we lined up, Captain Napier shouted to the King . . . he told me after that he heard a voice whisper: 'Father, shall I shoot?' and the answer: 'No, not yet.'

"Wilson gave the order to retire."

Several hours later.

"As we rode up, instead of finding the column, we found Captain Burrows and twenty-two troopers.

"All of us who had ridden through the great camps and spent the night in the bush knew that the end had come. . . . Napier had urged upon Forbes the fact that Wilson had relied on being reinforced by the entire command, with the Maxims, that every moment counted, as there were thousands of natives in front . . . in reality this (Burrows) was no reinforcement, it only sent Burrows and his troopers to die with Wilson.

". . . Captains Judd, Kirton, Fitzgerald, Greenfield and Brown gathered with us around Wilson. The

first three were experienced Colonials, and Wilson asked each what he thought was the best move.

"Kirton, with a bitter smile, said: 'There is no best move.'

"Fitzgerald said: 'We are in a hell of a fix. There is only one thing to do—cut our way out.'

"Judd said: 'This is the end.'

"Burrows said: 'We came in through a big regiment. Let's do as Fitzgerald says, though none of us will ever get through.'

". . . Wilson said: 'We are surrounded, between us and Forbes are the young impis, why throw ourselves away by fighting these? The royal Imbezu regiment will be with the King. Let's ride on to Lobengula, if we don't get him, at least we will try to kill his leaders and save our men in Bulawayo.'

". . . Wilson shouted to the King to come out and surrender . . . a scattering volley was the answer . . . Out of the bush leaped a splendid specimen of a warrior, a Martini rifle in his hand . . . he had an enormous chest like a bull.

"He fired at me and missed me . . . every second, I was coming nearer to him. Quick as a flash . . . with one long sweeping movement he drew from inside his shield his stabbing spear . . . as I saw him draw back his arm to drive the spear through me, I put a shot in his left side, which crumpled him. . . .

"I now had time to spare a glance to my left. Our men were being swept back by fire. Two horses were down. I saw Ingram pick up Fitzgerald as his horse was killed. As we fell back I heard Wilson shout:

'Cut those saddle pockets off the horses.' At that, little Dillon, our wonderful helio scout, dashed back and cut off the pockets containing the precious ammunition. . . .

"Wilson gave the order to fall back to the ant heap . . . it was twenty feet high, big enough to screen all our horses. Wilson stood on the top of it and directed the fight.

"The Matabele charged into the open, firing as they ran. Wilson shouted to us: 'Don't waste your shots. Pick your man.' Sometimes when one was about to pull the trigger, the man you aimed at would go down under the shot from some other rifle and one had to draw bead on another further back. The charge was broken. We killed many of the royal impi that day.

" . . . a thousand rifles and muzzle loaders cut loose at us wildly from the timber, making our position untenable. Wilson gave the order to mount. As I obeyed, a bullet knocked my rifle from my hand. It dropped at Judd's feet, he handed it to me smilingly, saying: 'Burnham, I think you lost something.'

"Wilson now gave orders to fall back into the timber on the opposite side of the vleei . . . several wild rushes were made, but we dropped so many that they concluded it was needless risk as they had us encircled with spear points.

"Wilson now reformed our little column. We had several wounded men, besides dismounted troopers leading wounded horses. These were put in the centre. Captain Judd and I were told to lead slowly towards

of the wild romances of the Elizabethan days, when adventurers roamed the world in search of new countries to conquer. Cecil Rhodes was the last of the merchant-adventurers.

Major Forbes' column got back to Bulawayo after several more fights, none very large. The resistance of the Matabele ended with the death of the King. I saw no more of the fighting after my return to Bulawayo where I was sent with despatches by Major Forbes a few days after he had received the news that Wilson and his party had all been killed.

This is the story of Wilson's fight, after the gallant Burnham had been sent back to Forbes for reinforcements.

This story of Wilson's Last Stand is pieced together by me as I heard it from the lips of two American scouts of Selous and Ingram, from Gooding, an Australian, and the induna Nityana, who told it to Le Sieur, Rhodes' secretary. This induna was present at the end.

One can say without any fear of contradiction that of all the splendid military legends which have ennobled the pages of British military history, not one surpasses this in gallantry nor is any more creditable to the nation and its high traditions.

Up to the end of that grim last stand there was no thought of surrender nor cry for quarter though support could never come, for the Shangaani river was in high flood. The Matabele were to see that white men could play a losing hand as well as a winning one. Taking cover behind the dead bodies of their horses

with iron calmness Wilson's men fought on, making every shot tell, picking out for their targets the indunas and the captains. For three long hours in spite of overwhelming odds they continued to pour a deadly and destructive fire into the encircling Matabele.

One by one, the white men fell under the heavy fire from the surrounding bush, but many of the wounded continued to fire or reload for their comrades.

Time after time the Matabele charged with their assegais only to be beaten back by the splendid shooting of the doomed men. At last, when the end was near, the few men unhurt helped their wounded comrades to their feet and standing, they sang "God Save the Queen". Their day was ended. Of all those gallant men, now only one stood erect, sword in one hand, revolver in the other; the rest lay prone, dead or dying on that "field of honour". The name of that last man will never be known, the man who stood alone, against an impi of Matabele.

The natives tell how he picked up several rifles and bandoliers; then made his way to an ant heap some fifty yards or so from where the rest lay stretched upon the earth. From this point of vantage he checked, single-handed, several rushes of the Matabele with cool and deadly fire. At last, shot through the hips, he sank to his knees, but continued to load and fire until he succumbed to his wounds. Then, and not till then, the Matabele came out from the bush, but when they reached that circle of the dead and dying several, unconquered still, raised their revolvers and fired.

So great had been the terror and demoralization which the incredible bravery of this little force had inspired in the Matabele, that when the revolvers rang out, they believed the abagati—wizards—had come to life again, and turned and fled into the bush. Not until many hours later—"when the sun was straight overhead" as the induna told it, did the Matabele venture to return and go over the ground. By this time all were dead and the vile aasvogels had started their feast.

Ingram, the American said: "Two of the men were dismounted, many others had their horses so done up they had to walk beside them. Well, some of the best mounted could have got away for sure, but, oh, hell—they were not that sort, not the men to leave a chum. No," he went on to say, "I guess they fought it out right there. Right where they stood."

It was as he said. Weeks later Dawson found them, bones picked clean, lying close together in a circle, alongside each other, as they had fought to the last supreme moment. And side by side they lie now in their grave in the Matoppos.

As I have already said, of all the whites who came to the royal kraal, Lobengula trusted Matabele Thompson and Mr. and Mrs. Colenbrander more than any. Now Colenbrander had not left the King until all the whites had gone and then he had impressed on him that no matter what happened he could trust two men. "Their words, King, are as mine, straight and true. What Ulodzi (Cecil Rhodes) and Dakatela (Dr. Jameson)

say to you or promise you, that, King, will they do. This I tell you, King, because you have been a friend to me."

Lobengula depended on this absolutely and because he did so, he came to his death, Wilson and his men were all killed, and hundreds of others lost their lives.

This was how it happened.

The great royal kraal was now strangely quiet and deserted, the war had lasted for many weeks and the impis had been mown down and decimated. All the fighting men were away and the women walked about quiet and hushed.

The Great, Great One sat in the godhlo—or inner court of his kraal—here it was quieter than anywhere. Now two captured white men were brought before the King and he asked them if he spared their lives could they do anything to stop the advance of Dr. Jim and his forces. They stated afterwards that the King was very ill and seemed to be in great agony from his gout. These two white men were Fairburn and Usher, and they reported that two other indunas stood behind the King at the interview.

By these two men Lobengula sent a letter to Dr. Jim saying; that he would come in if he were sent a safe conduct. Unluckily soon after these two whites left, news came of the disaster on the 'bemebsi and the King fled in his waggons. But in one waggon were five tins full of diamonds and a very large sum in English bank notes. This was known to the crooked little halfcaste, John Jacobs, who went with the King.

The end was drawing near for the last Matabele



King. Three native messengers arrived with the letter from Dr. Jameson. John Jacobs interpreted the letter to the King, telling him: "The White 'nkose says that you must come to Bulawayo at once," but the crooked little yellow rat for his own ends told the King not to obey but to fly.

The King did so and again the waggon moved on.

On he fled; disease and dysentery broke out amongst his women through the continual rains. He himself was in the last stages—death facing him from gout and other causes.

The King sent one more despairing note: "Give me a little time, 'nkose and by my royal word I will come. Behold I send you much money with this letter and will send you more. Only give me a few days time." With the letter went a large amount in Bank of England notes, received from the Chartered Company.

Lobengula's only son Nyamanda and a man named Mpini were sent with this.

A patrol of three men commanded by a sergeant ran into the two 'niggers' who handed them a letter for the great Umlungu 'nkose.

The sergeant took the money, read the letter, and tore it up. He divided the money with his men and told them to keep their mouths shut. It was more money than they had ever seen before.

Some nights after this their captain noticed that there was a lot of money circulating about in the gambling ring in his troop. Questions were asked and the whole thing came out, alas too late.

Wilson, reinforced by Bowers, had been sent to his

death and the King died thinking himself betrayed by those he was told he could trust.

The sergeant and his three men got several years imprisonment, but what of Lobengula?

Mj-jaan, the faithful induna who never left the King, could not rouse him one morning—truly the Great Black Elephant was sleeping soundly.

Greatly daring, the old induna put his head inside the waggon tent and called: “'Nkose, Baba 'nkose.” But the Great Bull Elephant had died in the night, a fugitive deserted and betrayed.

## CHAPTER TWELVE

WITH the end of the Matabele campaign I felt that I had earned a holiday. I wanted to see Leicester Square again and the—now gone-for-ever—Empire Lounge. Talk to pretty women, sup at Jimmy's and drive home in the early hours of the morning in a hansom cab.

When I cashed in after the show was over and found myself with close on three thousand pounds, London and Paris called to me and I packed up and went. Several kind friends, older and with much more experience, urged me to stay. They tried to show me the great opportunities which I was throwing away; two of them even offered me good positions, but it was no good and I left Matabeleland behind me.

For some years after this I roamed the world; Western America, Mexico, Canada, Alaska, Southern China, Japan and back to Alaska.

In the Arctic I heard the clarion call: "England at war with the Boers. Many disastrous defeats." Like thousands of others from different parts of the world, I started for the scene of operations, but whereas most went to England first, I—knowing the ropes—made direct for Cape Town.

At the Cape I got word, through some old friends,

that Jimmy Driscoll had formed his famous corps of scouts. I hurried to where he had his headquarters, and was given a temporary commission.

My previous experience in Matabeleland and my knowledge of the Boer (taal) and Zulu languages, stood me in good stead. To begin with the corps only numbered sixty, and for the first part of the war this number was never increased beyond a hundred men. They were the very best material for the work they had to do, and were the acme of efficiency—if not of looks.

The Boer War has been written about so much that I will not tire the reader with more of it, but this much I should like to say. The work done by Driscoll's scouts was vastly different from that of the work done by the regular cavalry or mounted infantry. For weeks on end we would operate as much as from fifty to one hundred miles ahead of our column, brigade or division. Once I did not see the division to which we were attached, for five weeks on end.

It was a grand and reckless existence, but we had to keep our eyes open for the tricks of the Boer women and girls. I remember one very pretty Boer girl, Annie Geldenhuis by name, who was living in a fine old farmhouse on the Zuurfontein-Pretoria line when I was scouting in that district with half my troop.

When I came to her farm I posted scouts on three kopjes within a couple of hundred yards of the farmhouse, and with one trooper I rode up to the stoep; as I reached it a tall, handsome girl came out with a big sun-bonnet on her head. Funnily enough for a

Boer girl, her hair was raven black. It was Annie Geldenhuis, and she was alone on the farm with her small sister and old mother, this old woman being pure Spanish.

Annie told the usual tale which all Boer women told so pat in those days. Her father and brother had been dragged on commando against their will, and she hated all Boers and liked the English, with lots more of the same sort. And would I come into the sit-kammer (sitting-room) and have some coffee? What awful stuff Boer coffee was!

Now I had posted the sentries on the kopjes, from the sides away from the farmhouse, and as I persisted in speaking English and making out that I could not understand a word of Boer, Annie was soon off her guard.

Turning to her little sister, a girl of about twelve with no stockings on but only a pair of veldtschoen (raw-hide sandals) on her feet, she said to her: "Quick, put this in the pocket of your kabaya (a light jacket worn in hot weather) and take it to them in the krantz (a narrow gorge)."

The words were hardly out of Annie's mouth before I heard the report of my men firing and the answering reply of the klick-klock, klick-klock, of Mauser rifles. Had it not been for my scouts, we should have been another lot of casualties. Annie had worked this with *three lots of yeomanry* previously. They had all been mopped up.

I tell this because one month after peace had been declared, I was at a dance in the big hall of the old

court house on the hill at Krugersdorp, across the road from the statue of Oom Paul, and the finest waltzer there and the one whom I got to give me more dances than I was entitled to get was pretty Annie. I know that her sweetheart, young du Plessis, was very much annoyed. "Anyhow," Annie assured me, "it was good that you escaped, because I hate killing men, and as you rode away *I had my Mauser trained on your back.*"

The Boer War had been going on for eighteen months, all the generals had gone home to collect their swords of honour and the freedom of different cities, so we settled down to real fighting and a *few overdue victories*. By now all the fine corps which had made names for themselves, such as Kitchener's Fighting Scouts, commanded by my old friend Colenbrander; the Imperial Light Horse, Rimmington's Tigers, Driscoll's Scouts and the South African Light Horse, were doubled and trebled in size and men taken into them, who as fighting material, were far from being able to keep up the standard of these fine regiments.

Peace declared, I went to Johannesburg to see what I could make. Jo'burg I found swarming with hundreds like myself looking for something worth while. Jack Brabant of Brabant's Horse told me that he had tried for a dozen things and could get nothing. Alec Capini—years afterwards Agent-General in London for the Union of South Africa—told me the same tale. I hung around for a time, made a little money here and there, and spent it as fast as I made it.

Finally, I heard something about Zanzibar and decided that I would give that place a trial. I reckoned it could not be worse than Jo'burg was just then. Funny how through the centuries it has always been the same with soldiers. Everyone calls them good fellows when the guns are talking, but when the fighting is done they are by no means so popular.

One Jew who had cleared out of Jo'burg when the trouble started and stayed in England until peace was declared, said to me when I asked him for a job which I knew I could handle and handle well:

"Oi! Oi! vy should I have such a useless man as a soldier feller to vork for me?"

That decided me and I got together what money I could and took the train for Durban. There I got a passage on a small boat for Zanzibar. She was a tiny little tub and often carried cargoes of raw sugar. As a result she simply swarmed with millions of huge cockroaches. As soon as it was dark in my tiny cabin, the walls would be black with the vile things and I would feel them crawling over my hands and face.

One night of this was enough, after that I preferred to sleep on deck. Another drawback was the vile smell which the raw sugar cargoes and copra cargoes had left. What voyages those were forty and fifty years ago! No matter what you paid on most voyages, it was tinned milk—if any—and brackish water towards the end of the voyage, while meals—even on good boats and in the first class—were only a shade above those which the sailors receive to-day on a liner.

After a few hectic days in Durban, and after paying

my passage, I had less than twenty pounds with which to land in Zanzibar. I wonder how many people have any idea of what it means to land in even a strange civilized country with only that amount, and—worse still—to know not a single person in the country on which you have just set foot, to have no trade nor profession. Well, that is bad enough but now add the fact of landing in a black country where no white man—even if he could get the chance—would be allowed to do manual work, where the total British population is under a dozen and the total white population of all nationalities less than twenty, and you have some idea of what I had taken on.

I was dumped with my baggage and kit on the small wharf near the customs, and there I was informed by the babu clerk that there was one hotel at which sahibs could stay. With three Zanzibar porters following me carrying my baggage, I started up the one and only straight road. This led past the Sultan's stables to the Afrika Hotel. Arrived there, I had a drink at the bar with the proprietor, a Rumanian named Gerber, and arranged for a room. He agreed to put me up for fifteen dibs (rupees) a day. This was the equivalent in those days of one pound, so it is not hard to work out, how long it would be before I should be on the beach.

My eyes had been kept well open as I walked up to the hotel, through streets so narrow that except for the one I was in, two laden porters could not have passed abreast and in that short walk I jostled or was jostled by the most cosmopolitan, coloured crowd that I



had ever met! That crowd was an eye-opener to me.

They were from all the coasts of Arabia, from the kingdom of Oman, from Somaliland and from Abyssinia, from Persia, India and Madagascar, and no one in all that picturesque crowd took the slightest notice of me.

The next day I had a look around, but had to be very careful as the alleys and crooked streets of Zanzibar are as easy to get lost in as the Hampton Court maze. I soon began to realize that I was up against the toughest proposition I had ever tackled. The more I looked round the more I felt my nerve going.

For two or three days I was candidly sight-seeing like any greenhorn. The city was so strange and so interesting that I spent hours roaming along the twisting roughly-paved alleys, that were merely gashes between Arab buildings. These alleys ran between the high, white coral walls of the great go-downs, where all the wealth of Zanzibar was stored, and the air was fragrant with scent of cloves and spices. I was fascinated. Here was the kind of place in which I had been itching to live. In the markets I saw Swahili in their semi-Arab costumes; swaggering Arab sailors; captains of dhows lying in the anchorage; clerkly and cringing Goanese and members of the Sultan's army; haughty Arab aristocrats like old Tipoo Tib, who was still alive; Hovas from Madagascar, speaking French; sleek Egyptians with red fezes; enormous blacks from Uganda and the borders of the great Sudan desert;

slavers from Abyssinia; shrewd Chinese always on the look out for bargains; Indian traders of every caste and race, and now and then a solitary white.

Well, day after day slid by, pleasantly I must admit, in the company of officers from the two gunboats stationed at Zanzibar and sometimes with officers from the cable ship, but still there was no prospect of a job. In the large lounge of the Afrika Hotel—it had been an Arab palace once—there was posted each day a small sheet from the Consulate, which had on it perhaps a dozen short cables of the most important news of the day. Twice I noticed an enormously fat old man who would scan these and then sit down and drink five or six whisky-and-sodas. He was to solve the problem which was now becoming a nightmare with me.

What could I do that the average man from a white country could not do? Was there any one thing at which I was an expert and that would be of use to me in a country where all were of some shade of black? I used to puzzle this question over in my mind as each day my dibs got less and less.

This big, fat, jolly old man was the greatest trader and outfitter on the coast in those days. On two different occasions he had asked me to have a drink, and I had returned the invitation. One day he asked and I refused, making some fool excuse. He soon got the facts out of me. I could not pay for a drink myself. Soon I was telling him that I could handle any coloured race of men and would make them work. The man who was listening employed coloured labour of all

kinds, sent caravans into the interior, used dozens of dhows and had his fingers dipped in every trade there was from Delagoa Bay to Aden. With this dear old boy I got my job.

This was the charge of the huge go-down which was being filled up with some of the great clove crop, Zanzibar's one and only export. Here I had under me a gang of about two hundred Swahilis with two Goanese and one babu, overseers and clerks. This was a dull job, but it had the advantage of being done in the comparative coolness of the go-down. These huge warehouses are built in such a way that the sun cannot penetrate. In common with the rest of Zanzibar, they are built of white coral, but the walls are about four feet thick and the windows are narrow and situated high in the wall, so that it is impossible for a direct beam of sunlight to penetrate into the go-down. The result is that the temperature inside remains fairly equitable and there is an absence of glare which in a tropical town, built entirely of white material, is extremely welcome.

The Swahili employed as porters are good workers if properly handled and their noses kept to it. Swahili really means a "coast dweller," and these fellows consider themselves on a much higher plane of civilization than any other of the natives, especially any boys from the interior. They are all Mohammedans and copy the Arab in all his ways, especially dress. In the old slave-owning days most of them were owned by the rich Arabs and worked on their huge clove plantations. When used on caravans—and Stanley and

other explorers found them the pick of the coast—they will only march under a headman of their own race or an Arab.

After the go-down job I next undertook the loading and unloading of dhows. This was much more interesting, for these dhows came from all the ports of the Indian Ocean.

I used to revel in this kind of work. As soon as the north-east trade wind had set in at the beginning of the year, hundreds of picturesque Arab and Persian dhows—differing not a scrap, if pictures are true, from those of two thousand years ago—set their sails and made their way across the Indian Ocean to Zanzibar. They came from every port of the East, as did the Phœnician traders hundreds of years ago, sailing by the sun or the stars, and their crews would perhaps number in all between 4,000 to 5,000 men, the wildest, the most romantic sailors in the world.

Arrived at Zanzibar—to them the Paris of the East—they would don their best clothes and with silver-handled daggers and swords—worn for use and not for show—thrust in their gaudy silk sashes, they would roam about the streets of the city.

Many of them probably were pirates, slave dealers, pearlers or robbers of the sea, but while in Zanzibar they were content to pose as traders and to exchange their dates, spices, coffee, prayer rugs and many other products of Persia, Arabia and Afghanistan for Western goods. My job as Trader Charlesworth's second-in-command brought me in contact with them all.

Two English-speaking Arabs helped me in my work with the dhows. They were good men and I soon grew to like them.

Through these Arabs I got my first inkling that the slave-trade was far from being dead. Some of the yarns they told me when I had got their confidence were borne out by the capture of two dhows full of slaves which were brought into Zanzibar whilst I was there.

One of these dhows had been caught coming from the Italian Somaliland coast and the other was well out at sea when captured. I went aboard the one caught in the Indian Ocean and though the dhow had been washed down, the vile, evil smelling bilge pumped out, the slaves washed and washed again and again, the stench was deadly. Nothing in all the world can smell quite so vile as the bilge on even an ordinary trading dhow, let alone a slaver. This bilge smell is a mixture of the odours of human and animal filth, the remains of rotten food, dead rats and other vermin, plus water which has been there for years and years. The smell is like that of a city sewer that has not been flushed for days.

When this slaver had been captured she had five dead in her hold, and living slaves were still shackled to the dead bodies which were in the first stage of putrefaction. The slaves I saw had been chained in the body and the fo'castle of the dhow. These boats are never decked over except for a small piece aft which makes a tiny cabin for the captain. The slaves are exposed to the terrific heat of the tropical sun which

beats down on their heads all day and they get a very small water allowance. This matter of water on a dhow deserves a few words. I have tried it and I know.

The Arab sailors know that many times during their lives they will be, at one time or another, short of water, so gradually they inure themselves to drink water which is at least half sea-water. Now this, to a person not used to it, is simply asking for illness, if not madness, and to give it to the poor devils they had in the hold, who had never tried it, was in itself enough to kill some of them.

In Zanzibar there was a good business done legally in slaves, even as late as 1869; and until quite recently the trade was carried on without the knowledge of the authorities. Zanzibar was for slaves what Chicago is to America for hogs: the centre of the trade for all the East. During the last official year of slavery there were 29,000 slaves sold in the slave market, but at least five times this number were sold secretly in order to avoid paying the Sultan his market dues. Adult males then sold for as low as one hundred and thirty-five shillings, females for labour for from eighty to one hundred shillings, and females for harems, young and in good health, for as high as two hundred and fifty shillings. In the last year there is documentary evidence that two hundred white women were sold in open auction. Most of these went to the interior of Persia, Arabia, Afghanistan, and some few were smuggled into the harems of rich Indian rajahs.

There was, in my time, a very old white woman living in Mecca, who had a tiny café where she sold

coffee to those making the pilgrimage. This woman was from Yorkshire and had been smuggled into a Turkish harem in her young days. From Turkey she had gone into the harem of a great sheikh, who had treated her well, and when she got old he had given her her freedom and set her up in the small café. Several people had offered to send her back to England, but her reply to all was the same:

"What can I do there? No one will remember me. Here I make a small living. I am old (she was seventy) and these people are kind to me. Here I shall die."

Of her past she would say little except that she was kidnapped in her youth and sold in Zanzibar.

According to the two Arabs, even in my time, a considerable business was done secretly. The slaves came chiefly from Abyssinia and Somaliland and were generally in the proportion of three women to one man. These slaves were mainly brought into Zanzibar quite openly. They would be landed in small parties of about six. The women would be brought in as members of the Arab trader's harem, and both men and women would be kept quiet by the trader warning them that if they tried to get away and a white man helped them they would be sacrificed to the white man's gods.

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

I HAD not been with Charlesworth long before he asked me if I would take charge of a caravan which he was sending to the shores of Lake Tanganyika, with two years' stores for an Englishman named Bradley and his companion, who were, I believe, collecting specimens for the New York Natural History Museum.

Charlesworth told me that if I went he would send his three best Arab headmen with me; these were Arabs I had been working with on the dhows, and one of them spoke fluent English. This man also had a smattering of several of the native lingoes—tribes through whose territory we should have to pass. In addition I was to have two body servants. These were Goanese—a cook and a clerk—and would supervise my own camp arrangements. I was also to take with me a trusted Askari as gunbearer upon whom I could rely. Then I had twenty Swahilis as a nucleus for my porters and twenty-five first-class Askaris—or soldiers. These men were Angonis and had acted as soldiers for caravans before; all trusty men. Considerable preparation was necessary before the caravan could start. This was undertaken by the Goanese clerk in one of the great go-downs. Everything had to be



weighed and made up into loads of sixty pounds, no matter what the goods might be, from a boat to a large tent; from an engine to consignments of trade cloth, all had to be in pieces or packages of sixty pounds. If the loads were for my own consumption or for the consumption of a hunter or trader in the interior; then each unit of sixty pounds would be made up of contents which would all become exhausted at the same time. There would be enough tea, sugar, tinned milk, biscuits, canned meats, dried meats such as ham, cigarettes and such-like goods, to last for a given time and every such case would be lead or tin lined. The finest firm in those days, for goods on which you could depend, was Fortnum & Mason. They were not cheap, but you could count on having your order accurately filled and all goods were properly packed.

¶ In my time Charlesworth's head clerk was a Parsee from Bombay. When a caravan such as mine was going into the interior Charlesworth would hand this Parsee a list of the goods that had been ordered. The whole responsibility for the packing of the goods was held by this Parsee who had working under him in the go-down a number of Goanese clerks and native porters. The natives did all the carrying and lifting, but the actual weighing, checking and packing was done by the Goanese alone, and very good they were at it.

The charge for freighting in from the coast to the shore of Lake Tanganyika was then two hundred rupees a load, plus the cost of shipping from Zanzibar

to the point of the coast from which the caravan had to start.

The time came when I was landed from two huge modern dhows belonging to my employer at the mouth of the Rufiji river. Our voyage had been prolonged as we had had to lay-to for a pretty bad storm for three days, in the shelter of Mafia Island which is about twenty-eight miles from the river's mouth. Thanks to the sea-gods, I am never sea-sick, but you should have seen my two Goanese. They turned white and green by turns.

I went through a country teeming with wild game and with still wilder savages, and I was—as were all my kind—alone. How lonely the interior was for a white man in those days! Alone in Central Africa, one white man remaining alive by the dread of his supposed powers and by the prestige he maintained by showing a front and by the liberal use of the chiboko. Let a native answer you back once, and if you did not knock him down—you might grace a stew-pot the next day.

Immediately I landed I had to obtain porters. To do this it was necessary to pay the chief through whose district I intended to pass. The carriers themselves really got nothing except their food. When one came to the end of the district the porters would go no further, and then one had to send runners on to the chief of the next district and arrange for a second lot to take over, paying the chief a sum for the labour which was fixed by bargaining. This arrangement

was repeated at every district until the end of the journey.

Very few carriers would consent to go beyond their own district as they were afraid of the return journey back to their homes. Whilst with the caravan the porters were protected by the Askaris who were adequately armed, but going home they had not this advantage and they knew that if they passed unprotected through the territory of a neighbouring tribe there was a greater chance of being eaten than of reaching home alive.

My first lot of carriers were made up of Yaos—these were mostly men from around the river mouth—Awembas, Angonis and others. On the advice of my head Arab I had four Angonis under-headmen; these four were really remarkable shots with their old muskets. I had been told by Charlesworth to be sure and get as many carriers from different tribes as I could and to break up these on the basis of the Indian infantry regiments of the North-West Frontier where companies are made up of different religions and races. In this way there is less chance of having trouble. The different tribes will not act together, there is always some tribal jealousy or hatred which will keep them apart—even if they had not on more than one occasion eaten each other.

I divided the caravan into three distinct bodies, front, middle, and rear, each section having an Arab headman as its chief. When I assembled my four hundred natives for the first time, chaos reigned supreme. It took my Arabs and myself a good two

hours to get them sorted into their three divisions. They were a motley crowd, some long, some short and others fat or thin. The best caravan carrier is the short, medium-stout boy; this type will outlast them all, especially the tall man.

When I arrived on the camp ground it was to find all the carriers walking in and out of the loads, taking a look-see as to which was the nicest, most compact and easiest to lift. Awkward shaped ones were *not* in demand. Some were pulling at one load and some at another. Fights were in progress where two boys wanted the same load, and, ye Gods, what a devil of a row they were making!

With my head Arab I waded into this riot, and we straightened things out with a plentiful use of our chibokos. At last we got them in their three divisions, the loads in three piles under the eye of an Arab and each load with its number on it. Then the carriers were marched up, given their load and then forced up in column of march, load on head, ready to start. From then on each boy knew his place and load and there was no more trouble.

The great trouble I found was the unevenness of the carriers. There are always some that are weaker than others, some more shiftless and others who are no darned good anyhow. As soon as possible I would weed these last out, but very often it was a case of fire one boy of a party from one tribe and the rest of the tribe would quit as well.

Each night on arrival in camp, and each morning before starting out, I held a kind of orderly room. The

night court was mainly for requests and the morning one for adjudication and reports from the under-headmen and headmen. Then any trouble with carriers was punished, the first offence as leniently as I could possibly manage without lowering prestige, but the second always receiving a dose of the chiboko. In case I may seem to have used this too much, let me say that on the whole trip I only had four men triced up and *these were all in the first two weeks*.

In the morning, when the chief Arab reported to me that the caravan was ready to start, I would walk down the whole line and see for myself that all was as it should be. As soon as we arrived at a place which I selected for camp, my own personal boys would set up my two tents and in a very short time I would be sitting down to a meal such as it was, and almost as quickly the carriers would have had theirs.

It is so long ago that I have forgotten just how many days we had been on the journey, when I came to a very wide, swift-flowing stream, but it must have been quite four weeks. This river was full of crocodiles, hundreds and hundreds of them and a good many hippos.

Here I lost my first two men.

A snake bit one man and in two minutes he had died in the most awful agony. The other was seized by a croc' when a good fifty yards from the river, but before anyone could get to him, the brute had pulled him to the river bank and gone in with him. Things like this get on a man's nerves when he is alone—no other white man with him. There is too, always the dread

of falling sick and being deserted by one's natives, a by no means uncommon occurrence in those days. Many diseases can attack one, such as malaria, to prevent which I dosed myself with quinine three times a day. Sleeping sickness was another thing we dreaded; this is caused by the tse-tse fly, which inoculates its victim by stinging him on the hand, neck or just at the fold of the arm at the elbow. It was estimated that 250,000 natives died of this disease in Uganda alone. Central Africa in those days was decimated by it.

Another bad disease—I finally got a touch of it—was black-water fever. In those days it was nearly always fatal, not more than two in ten surviving; but to-day fatality has been reduced to as low as one death in twenty. Add to these calamities such mild things as sun-stroke, dysentery and typhoid and it is easy to see that caravan life was by no means as comfortable as my old transport-rider days. The river which was the cause of my losing my first two men looked to me to be extremely difficult to cross, but my head Arab said that the Yaos would make boats. This was such an interesting operation to me that I will describe it; these wonderful boats were made of bark, and I have never seen such a thing done in any other part of the world, though I have seen canoes made and have handled them in most wild countries.

The Yaos would select a very large tree after a careful and prolonged search. The bark of this tree was first cut all round the bottom. Next, one of the Yaos made

what I will call a bush ladder. This was done by cutting down a sapling with a large fork at its top, which was bent against the tree. The branches of the sapling were then cut off about nine inches to a foot from the trunk so that they would act like steps of a ladder. A Yao would then climb up this ladder and cut the bark all round the big tree at a height of twenty feet from the bottom cut.

Next, a cut was made right down the trunk of the tree from the incision in the bark at the top to the cut in the bark at the base. Then wedges of wood were forced into the long cut from the top to base and by continual tapping of these the bark around the tree was removed in one complete piece, looking, when laid on the ground, much like a large brown sewer pipe. Now at each end of the bark fires were lighted. Small quantities of water were constantly poured on these fires to make lots of steam, which made it possible for the ends of the bark to be bent upwards and sewn with fibres procured from other trees nearby, whilst the sides were forced out.

Holes were cut in the bark with assegais and large bamboos forced through and lashed lengthways and crossways to stiffen and strengthen the boat.

Then two large outriggers of bamboo were made to prevent it turning over. In half a day I had ten of these boats finished and ready for passengers and freight. Another half day and all were across safely, except for the last boatload, which was attacked by an old bull hippo just as it was reaching the shore. The great brute smashed the boat to pieces, but none of

the packages was lost and only one man—an Awemba—was hurt slightly.

The night after crossing the river I made a point of holding a more than usually formal court. I sat at my table with plenty of lights around me and the caravan formed a crescent in front. Then I had the Arab headman in charge of the Yaos to bring the boys to me who had worked at the making of the bark canoes. To each of these I gave an extra present of beads and cloth, not much, but just enough to show that the extra work and skill which they had shown had been appreciated. This seemed to create the very best of impressions as I had hoped it would. It is the same the world over. Pat a good man on the back when he is good, and it does a hell of a lot to make things go smoothly.

That night fifty-two of my men notified me that they would go no further as they feared the tribe and chief whose district we were to pass through next. This was in accordance with custom and their contract, so I paid them off and sent a runner ahead with the usual small gift to the chief and asking for sixty carriers.

At dark the next day the chief himself arrived with eighty carriers and handed them over to me. I would only take sixty and paid him for these in the usual trade of beads and calico. These men were the most villainous lot I had seen in all my travels up to then. No wonder the rest of the carriers began to grumble. These beauties were stark naked, their decorations consisting of nicely filed teeth and white daubs on



their faces. I found out from one of my Arab headmen that they had boasted of having eaten one of their number who had died. Two days later we came on a dead hippo, dead many days and stinking to high Heaven. The stench was enough to kill even a black, yet these beauties left the camp at night and went back and gorged until their stomachs, next day, looked as if they would burst and they stank like a dog who has been out and rolled in something dead.

About a week after this I was delayed owing to heavy rains, and this caused me to camp on the edge of a lake for five days. Here I shot my first hippo. Not for sport but for meat. Somehow I can never bring myself to kill animals just for the sake of seeing the poor beast fall or of saying I have shot one. This especially applies—with me—to the shooting of larger mammals. I always got more thrills in taking a shot at a man who could and would just as soon take a shot at me. Wild beasts, even the largest of them, are so helpless against modern weapons shooting heavy bullets.

On this hunt I took four under-headmen with me as gunbearers and spearers and after dodging about for some time we spotted a large bull with three cows feeding at a distance of about eighty yards from us. I killed two cows while the bull looked on and seemed to pay no attention at all; then as he offered me a good target I fired at him and the great brute dropped, but in a few seconds was up again. I fired at him once more, hit him and this time he shook his great head and made slowly towards the water, stumbled, fell,

then was up again. Suddenly, he turned right round and came staggering towards us stumbling as he came. I fired again, and this time he fell for good. This took place about a mile and a half from the caravan, and as it was now about four in the afternoon I made for the camp.

Next morning early I took a number of carriers to where I had left the dead hippos. They were to cut them up and carry the meat back to the camp. On my arrival at the place where I had left the dead animals, I was amazed to see them surrounded by a large number of natives, all sitting round but not touching them. I wondered where the devil they could have sprung from, for as far as I or any of my men knew, there were no inhabitants within fifty miles. Here was a good instance of bush telegraph. Drums must have been at work to send the news.

The waiting natives were told they could cut the hippos open and take the entrails but must not touch the meat. Immediately a rough and tumble started which had any rugby scrum beaten. They all—men and women—hailed off the few clothes which they had on, and made a rush at the dead animals. Now hippo hide is from an inch to two inches thick, and even with good Sheffield steel takes some cutting through. Yet in a few minutes with their hand-made axes and knives, the men had cut the stomachs open and were actually crawling right inside, cutting away the entrails and handing them out to their womenfolk. Towards the end I saw a man with more than half his body inside the stomach of one hippo resting there

while he cut off tit-bits and ate them. Finally, I drove them all away and my men started in.

By midday the three great brutes had been picked clean and only the skeletons were left, even the great heads had been cleaned of any meat. All the carriers were bloody from head to foot, and the stench coming from them was appalling.

Here is a recipe for hippo feet *en casserole*, with the top joints of the legs added. The boys dug fairly large holes in the ground, then they collected hard, dry wood and made a fire in the holes. When these fires had died down to red-hot embers, they were covered with a layer of earth about an inch or so in depth, the legs and feet were then put in—one piece to each hole—and more earth to put over the top of the pieces, this time to a depth of about six inches. Next, a fire was lighted on the top of each and kept burning fiercely for a good six or seven hours. Then the fire was brushed away, the holes opened and the foot or leg taken out, done to a turn. I had a taste and found that it was not half bad, especially the actual foot which was very glutinous and tasted somewhat like a giant pig's trotter with a slightly sweet taste. The carriers gorged and gorged, and danced and yelled, to the accompaniment of some weird instrument, quite like a modern jazz band. I should think that the big drum which belonged to one of the carriers, could have been heard ten miles away.

Four days after this, one hundred carriers went back to their districts and I stayed while the local chief replaced them by men of his own tribe. He

summoned the men from their different villages by the beating of a gigantic drum which was kept going all night. The message it sent told his headmen at various villages to send in men for carriers, and the next day they arrived in parties of from three to ten until the full hundred were at the main village.

The great drum used here was made from a tree trunk which had been hollowed out by cutting with knives and not by fire—it must have taken years to do with the tools at their disposal. It was five feet long and three feet six inches in diameter. The skins had been stretched on the drum head when wet and were fastened all around by wooden pegs driven into the sides of the drum. This drum was beaten with sticks, the loudest notes being obtained by beating at the extreme edge, while the deep notes were got from the centre. The chief said that this drum would send messages to the farthest part of his territory, say about twenty miles. Only certain men of a few families were allowed to use the drum and the technique of sending was handed down from father to son. Through an interpreter, I asked the chief to send a message to his farthest village for a runner to be sent in at once. This man arrived in the village under two hours from the time that the message was sent. I noticed that most of the messages were sent at night. I suppose that the air carries sound better at night than when the sun is up.

The porters whom I obtained from this village had a trick of carrying which was quite different from any I had ever seen before. All native tribes in Africa

carry on the head, and there is nothing more graceful than the way in which the women carry on their heads the calabashes full of water. This they learn to do as little children.

These carriers, however, put their loads in a kind of sack made from fibrous bark and tied it up with a fibre cord; next, a stick four feet long was lashed to it so that the ends projected about a foot at either end of the load. The boy was then ready. He now had a handle at either end for hoisting purposes and with the help of his woman or another boy swung the load on his head. In his hand he carried two sticks about five or six feet long, each with a fork at the top, and when the caravan halted or his lot had to wait for the front to get ahead or the rear to catch up, instead of lowering the load, he stuck the forked sticks in the ground, fork upwards. The stick fastened in the load was balanced on these, transferring the weight from the porter's head to the supporting sticks.

From the start I made it a rule to be at the head of the caravan when it marched off, and then to follow in the rear with one Arab and one under-headman. In this way I was assured that everything was in order and that nothing had been left in the camp. Here I might say that one should not go nosing about in one's camp kitchen any more than one should scrutinize the kitchens even of the finest restaurants. My camp kitchen—what little there was of it—was always erected at a slight distance from the back of my tents. One morning I came on this kitchen place from behind it, as I was returning to my tent, and spotted my cook

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boy giving a final wipe to one of my plates with his filthy loin cloth.

I had better explain here that every Askari, or soldier, was armed with an old musket, usually Sniders—for some reason or other. It was the duty of these Askaris to keep guard at night, see that none of the carriers deserted with their loads, fight if and when it was necessary for them to do so, and generally protect the caravan. I always had—when possible—several out on either flank and half a dozen in the rear. We had been travelling for several weeks and were nearing the Lake country, when I began to get reports from time to time, of small caravans belonging to Arab and Indian traders being attacked, killed and their goods taken. This was being done by either Wa-kikuyu or Masai according to native reports.

This put me on my guard, and I began to give my Askaris and Swahilis some military training. I also recruited fifty men from a fighting tribe, these being armed with seven-foot shields of ox-hide, four throwing spears and one huge stabbing spear for close fighting. I felt that a little training would prepare my men for the attack which I was perfectly certain would take place. The hardest thing to teach a native is to keep guard. It is a surprising peculiarity of all African natives, that even though in enemy country and surrounded by an enemy bent on massacring every one of them, and knowing that they will be attacked at any moment, they have not the slightest idea or wish to keep on the alert.

One of my best Askaris, and a brave man, a fine



soldier, and a steady gun-bearer, was a glaring instance of this. When only a boy of seven, he had seen his whole kraal wiped out by a surprise attack of the murdering Masai. Every man, woman and child—except himself—had been killed and every head of cattle driven off. Yet, on going the rounds one night, to see that all was right, I found this man lying fast asleep at his post. I kicked him hard on his buttocks; the only effect it had was to make him roll over and grunt.

As I have said, I found it necessary to have my men better organized from a military viewpoint, seeing that we might be attacked, not only in respect of keeping guard, but also in the methods of fighting.

I now taught the native soldiers I had engaged and who carried spears and shields, to keep together, forming a line with their shields touching. Behind these stood the Askaris and Zanzibaris who carried muskets. These were naturally the best men I had with me, all tried fighting men. After much trouble I was able to put this small but select band through the manual exercises by making them imitate the various movements I did in front of them.

Each night alarming messages would be brought into camp by my scouts and by friendly natives who were dreading a visit from the marauders. Every night when I made camp, I formed a zariba of the packages and placed outposts to give me warning of any attack. When this did come I knew that it was certain to be just as dawn was breaking. I have found in my travels in savage countries that this practice of making an

attack just before daybreak prevails amongst savage tribes the world over. The reason is, I think, because not only is vitality at its lowest point just then, but at that time the desire for rest and sleep has greatest power over the human body; consequently the attacked are less likely to be alert and less fitted to offer a powerful resistance.

One morning, the long-expected—and by me—dreaded attack took place. I had made camp that night close to a deep ravine through which ran a raging torrent. This ravine was crossed by a native bridge. I had placed a strong picket at our side of this bridge and given strict orders that they were to send one of their number to me if they saw any sign of an enemy approaching. The remainder of the outpost were to stay behind and destroy the bridge as soon as the enemy had crossed, so as to cut off their retreat.

I was going to give the plundering Masai a lesson which they would remember for years.

A messenger came into camp just before dawn and told me that the enemy had crossed the bridge. My Arab headman—my second-in-command—at once got all the men to their stations, and I was ready to give the attackers a warm reception.

They came boldly on, never dreaming that we were waiting for them, and no doubt expecting the usual easy victory they had always had on all their raids. They knew that their name alone instilled abject fear into most natives.

They were to get their eyes opened and the greatest surprise of their lives. Owing to the path along which

they advanced being extremely narrow, they were in most cases forced to approach in single file, and I waited until they were almost on us before giving the word to fire.

I had given strict orders before this that not a shot was to be fired, not a man to move or make a sound, until I had fired my rifle. I had told them—through the Arab headmen—that I and the Arabs would shoot the man who disobeyed.

Coming steadily on, the Masai had got within fifty yards of us, when I fired, and my rifle-men opened on them with a straggling volley, while my native soldiers sent a flight of spears at them.

The surprise was complete, and before the attacking Masai could recover themselves, I led my men at them with spears and bayonets. Bolting in a mad panic, we pursued them, killing many of them as they ran. Arriving at the ravine through which the river roared, they found the bridge destroyed, and many of them jumped over the edge of the ravine into the torrent below. I think that not a man of these escaped from drowning.

I counted eighty-three of their killed and reckoned that the Masai losses that day must have trebled this, while the total loss of my men was one killed and three wounded.

Shortly after this I got news that a caravan belonging to two white men—ivory hunters—had been attacked and completely wiped out: white men and bearers all being killed by the murdering Masai and their goods looted.

I had no more trouble after that, and less than three weeks from the day of the attack I delivered my goods to the men to whom they were consigned by Charlesworth. Then I started back to the coast with those Askaris and men who wished to return. These were less than a third as the others had been attracted by the high pay offered by Bradley and his companion. My band dwindled down to twenty-seven when I started on the return journey. This was uneventful; I ran down the Rufiji river the last part of the journey, doing this in native canoes which I purchased, eventually reaching Mohoro, a small native town on the Rufiji delta.

Here I was lucky enough to find a dhow which was sailing for Zanzibar, a distance of about two hundred miles. For the sum of five rupees for myself, three for each of my Arabs and two for each Zanzibari, the captain of the dhow agreed to take me and my men to Zanzibar. But for this no accommodation was provided except a small amount of brackish water each day.

The boat had a single mast and carried one huge lateen sail. It had no compass or lights, and was navigated up the coast by keeping as close as possible to the shore. There was no place on her to make a fire, nor any provision for cooking. It had been so, the Arab captain told me, in his father's day. What was good enough for him, "May he be resting in the Paradise of Allah with hundreds of houris to comfort him," was good enough for any who chose to travel with him. All this was carefully interpreted to me by one of my

Arabs—who seemed to cordially agree with the views of the Arab captain.

With my men and the crew of the dhow, there were fifty-three people on board. Half this number would have been too many for the small craft. We started along the coast, but had not gone far before we were in trouble. With the great sail set, and a stiff, favouring breeze, we went merrily along, when suddenly we were brought up all standing, and found that we had run foul of some obstacle. Soon we were surrounded by a dozen native canoes, their owners demanding—with threats—that they be compensated for the damage which the dhow had done to their nets.

Things began to take a serious turn. Several of the natives with spears in their hands were starting to climb on board. Not wanting to start shooting, I picked up a heavy piece of cast iron—there was lots of the stuff on board—and this I heaved into the largest canoe, smashing it. Just at that moment the breeze freshened, and we surged clear of the nets.

In less than two hours, after making fine headway, we suddenly came to again with a terrific jerk. This time it was a dead stop.

There was wild excitement, an immense amount of shouting and gesticulating; a perfect pandemonium of noise, the Arab captain doing more shouting and waving of hands to heaven than all the rest. Thinking that he was giving orders, I stood admiring the energy he was showing and thinking he must have been one of the old corsair breed. But what amazed me more than his energy was the fact that not a soul aboard—

Arab or native—made the slightest attempt to carry out his orders.

I asked my Arab headman the reason.

“He is calling on Allah for help. Allah of the ninety-and-nine blessed names. Truly the captain is a very pious and holy man,” was the reply I received.

That did not sound so good to me.

I was rather of the Yankee idea: “That God helps him who helps himself.” I immediately got my Arabs and some of my men. Told them what I was going to do and what I wanted done.

Things began to calm down a little. First I took soundings with a piece of iron tied to the end of an old piece of coir rope. On one side of the dhow there was quite twenty feet of water. On the other side not more than three feet. That showed me that we had run on a reef. Next I lashed some rope to the anchor and took it about twenty yards from the ship, in the small boat, then I dumped the anchor overboard.

Back to the ship I went and made every man aboard—Arab and native—haul on that rope. The chiboko I had in my hand persuaded those who couldn’t or wouldn’t understand what I wanted done. I should not have hesitated to use my revolver had the need arisen. It took four hours before we got her off and most of the time I was using the chiboko on the backs of those who were not pulling their weight.

When we got her off I found that she was leaking badly and there was not a thing aboard with which I could caulk her. More chiboko to keep all hands bailing while the captain kept her headed for Zanzibar.

We soon had a fine escort of sharks—they swarm in those seas, and instinct seems to tell them when there is a prospect of a good meal. Three days after leaving the reef we sailed into Zanzibar harbour. I was very glad when I sighted the great white building of the Sultan's palace. I wasted no time in getting ashore and reporting to dear old Charlesworth. That night I spent at his house and had a dinner—with wine—fit for the Sultan himself.

Picking up a huge piece of coral rock fallen from the wall, my companion, a man of great strength, hurled it at the entrance as they came in. It took the Arab in the stomach and he went down with a howling gasp, then we charged the natives, who with their master hors-de-combat were not so aggressive as they might have been.

Leaving our donkey to find its way back if it could, we legged it for a clove plantation which gave us some cover and hid there until dawn.

Not knowing what reports might get about and fearing that some complications might take place which would make things unpleasant, I seized the opportunity the next day to sail in a dhow belonging to my friend and employer. This vessel was bound for Dar-es-Salaam and then for Djibuti.

Dar-es-Salaam was in those days—when the capital of German East Africa—the best laid-out and most attractive city belonging to any of the powers with possessions on the East African coast. The drawback to the place was the bullying, intolerant manner of the Prussian officers. I was sitting one day in a beer-garden drinking with an old German, Captain Phloenz of the D.S.O.A. ship *Kaiser*, a kindly, jolly old seaman, when, all the tables being occupied, a voice ordered us to get up and give the speaker our table. All said in perfect English, so that I could not make out that I did not understand.

The speaker was a huge, bull-necked lieutenant of German Askaris (native soldiers.) The old seaman at once stood up and gave a bowing salute. I remained



seated and having had more than one drink over my limit, told him to go to hell and clear out.

He did and came back with a file of soldiers who marched me to the guard-house, where I cooled my heels until the next morning when I was brought before a colonel. Not allowing me to say a word in my defence, this beauty informed me that he gave me twenty-four hours in which to leave German territory. If I was found in it after that, I should be imprisoned for six months. I went and did not waste any time in getting aboard the dhow which sailed that night for the French port.

It must be understood that I am now writing of more than thirty years ago, when things were pretty lawless on that coast and when an Englishman in any of the territories belonging to foreign powers was looked upon as lawful prey. French people were as bad then in their feelings towards us, if not worse, than the Germans.

Djibuti is a little town in French Somaliland which is on the edge of the great African desert and its sea side is on the shores of the Gulf of Aden. It shimmers in the terrific glare of the equatorial sun all day. I have lived in Aden and that place is hot, damned hot, but I think that in many respects Djibuti can beat it.

I expect the Abyssinian population has increased now, but even in my day it made up a good third of the town's inhabitants. It takes three days by the railway to get to Addis-Ababa from Djibuti, but nearly that number of weeks to do it by mules. This slave-owning race of blacks after raiding British territory for

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

IN and around the bazaars in Zanzibar where I used to spend many mornings, I had often heard of the fabulous buried treasure in the Dunga palace. This intrigued me.

There is not the least doubt that the treasure is there, whether it will ever be found is quite another matter. I do know, however, that when I went to have a look for it, it was a far from healthy job. The natives of all races in Zanzibar not only looked on the place with superstition, but they were strongly averse to anyone fooling around the old palace.

I had made acquaintance with an American who was waiting at Zanzibar for a boat to take him to the Persian Gulf. This man and I decided to have a try at finding this reputed treasure.

We started out for the place just before dusk with some equipment on a donkey, all of it well wrapped up so that nobody should guess what we were up to. Arriving at the ruined palace, we piled everything outside on a huge kind of veranda. The flooring both outside and in was littered with the filth of ages and the first apartment we entered had an odour which was musty and oppressive.

Our lanterns showed that it was quite bare of any

kind of furniture or decorations except those painted on the walls. The very air and look of the place was enough to make the most sceptical expect to see some murdered harem beauty come gliding through the arched doorway.

Wasting no time we proceeded to get down to the passages and dungeons below but found so much debris here and so much of the roof fallen in that I soon realized that we had come on a fool's errand. It would have been a job for weeks, not for one night.

We prowled all round the old palace until I was fed up, and had persuaded my companion at last that it was useless our staying—and dangerous.

My American friend and I were about to go through the archway leading out to the great veranda when framed in the opening I saw a figure, and by no means an attractive one. The light from our lanterns showed us an Arab who looked the image of a Barbary pirate. He had a terrible scar across his face which had destroyed one eye, the good one gave us a look, however, which was far from friendly. Lean, tough and scowling he gave me the impression of having a hair-trigger temper—most Arabs have. Behind him I could see three natives and all appeared armed.

Without a word of warning of any kind they made a dash at us. We were not armed, such things were not necessary in Zanzibar in the ordinary way. We were up to a fool business and one that would not have been approved of by Rogers, the Regent, or General Raikes, the officer commanding the Sultan's troops, or Goldie-Taubman of the Police.

slaves for years have now something else to occupy their minds.

I stepped ashore on to the stone causeway which extends far out across the coral reefs of Djibuti's harbour. It was a strange place, this Somali town with its small garrison of French troops. Literally hundreds of small black devils swarmed around me for baksheesh, it was simply useless to attempt to drive them away.

It was a most disappointing place to me after Zanzibar. The buildings were of stone or dirty concrete, but the streets were wide. Shops and their contents looked all fly-blown, but the shady awnings of the cafés looked inviting. These were all crowded with what French officials there happened to be stationed in the town.

The native quarter I found to be round an open square and here the filth and stench was indescribable. It was interesting, however, for there were caravans from the distant parts of the great desert which had come in to trade. Ragged Somalis with their wild-looking, bushy hair; Arabs of one kind or another; camels, goats and donkeys, all mixed up in confusion. The market shed was almost pitch black with the millions of flies. I beat a hasty retreat from it and made for a café with the high-sounding name of Hotel de France, and had a cool "essky Scotty," as the black boy called it, with some nice, warm soda-water. Ugh!

I thought that France held to this little strip of the coast of Somaliland as the gateway to Abyssinia—and the Italians will find before long that France knew

what she was about—which the French knew some day would fall like a ripe plum into the mouth of some European nation.

But that native quarter, I kept thinking, what a difference to Zanzibar. The front yard—so to speak—all spick and span like Paris itself, but the back a cess-pool of filth and vice. Paris all over.

I made it a habit to come ashore from the dhow each day, she was to be here eight days in all, and would then drop me at Aden where I was to pick up a B.I. boat which would land me back at Zanzibar.

Mostly by mid-day I would be at the same table in the Hotel de France and have my drinks. Here I had often noticed a fat French officer—a captain—always in uniform of dirty white which looked as if he had slept in it. This man was a thick-set, bullying-looking beast, more like a German than a Frenchman.

One of the native women—little more than a girl—dressed in a white smock, was in the habit of clearing the glasses off the tables which had been left by customers who had gone away. As she did this she would give the table top a wipe round with a wet cloth.

One day she accidentally dropped some liquor down the back of this officer, who without a second's delay, cut the woman across the face with his chiboko—rhino-hide whip—laying her cheek open as if cut with a knife and was proceeding to give her some more. I am no nigger lover, but this made me see red, and before I realized what a fool I was, I had that chiboko out of his hand and had given him a taste of his own medicine.

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

AS the part played by Dinizulu, King of the Zulus, in the rebellion was of the utmost importance, and as his position and actions have never been fully explained to people in England, I will tell of his part in the trouble and give a full account of him and his family history.

This is necessary, as without it a person who has not lived in Natal will find it hard to understand what follows and the feelings of the Natal people.

Dinizulu was the eldest son of Cetewayo, who was King of the Zulus at the time of the Zulu War with Great Britain in 1879, when the Prince Imperial of France was killed and when we suffered the terrible defeat and massacre at Isandlwana—"The Field of the Little Hand".

The name Dinizulu really means in the flowery Zulu language: "One who will cause worry to the Zulu people." This man was born in 1870, and after the Zulu War of 1879, during the long imprisonment of his father, Cetewayo, he was brought up under the guardianship of his uncle, Ndabuko. Ndabuko was a younger brother of Cetewayo and was a different type of man altogether. He always posed as a friend

of the English, yet was forever plotting and stirring up trouble.

At the defeat of Cetewayo's forces, near the great kraal Ulundi, Dinizulu was rescued and hidden by a faithful induna of his father's, named Sitshisili, who later, during the Zulu rebellion, led his tribe against his own people.

In 1887, the Imperial Government assumed full control of Zululand; the Proclamation of this was read by the Governor to 20,000 Zulus who, with their chiefs, assembled at the little border town of Eschowe for the event.

In 1888, Dinizulu, with two other leading indunas, was arrested for inciting two tribes to break the peace, and the three were sentenced to ten, twelve and fourteen years' imprisonment each, Dinizulu getting the heaviest sentence. After the trial at Eschowe, he was kept in the local prison for a short time and then deported to St. Helena. He went there with the two other chiefs who had been sentenced with him. He remained at St. Helena until 1897, when the three were brought back to Zululand. At this period Zululand was formally annexed by the Province of Natal with the consent of the Imperial Government.

The terms on which Dinizulu was allowed back were important. *He was to abstain from all treasonous talk, agree to govern his race with the assistance of a chief magistrate and at all times to assist the Government in maintaining order.* At this period it was estimated—up to then there had been no census taken by the Government—

The Boer War was not so long over and Marchand and Fashoda were still things which the French remembered. He let out a shriek of rage and called me all the English pigs and other names he could lay his tongue to, at the same time yelling for the native police.

More trouble and none of my asking. I took to my heels and made for the water-front; getting into a native craft, by the liberal use of baksheesh I got aboard the dhow and the captain got under way. The great brown lateen sail, graceful and lofty, swayed in the breeze and she soon began to throw up a white spume at her prow. Battered and sea-worn that old dhow might have been, but she had a pretty turn of speed with a favouring wind and I gazed over her stern at the stone jetty from which I had just made my escape.

She gathered headway and the captain laid her course for Aden and—for me—safety, but it would be touch and go, that I knew. However, Captain Ali bin Majid bin Azzan was a veteran mariner of the Indian Ocean and a man who had taken risks all his life—for a price.

He was absorbed in attending to getting his craft out to sea and did not see what I did. That was the approach of a fast steam launch flying the tricolour, throwing the spray over her bows and making for us at an angle which would make her intercept our course.

Luckily for me she swung under our stern—a fool move—where she was not seen by the captain. I lifted a heavy brass-bound cask which lay near and



dropped this over on the launch. It landed on the small engine with a crash and the last I saw of that launch, she was still being tinkered with by her crew.

A week's stay at Aden, and then I caught my B.I. boat and got back safely to Zanzibar where I found all quiet, and that I had had my trip for nothing, as not even my friend had heard a word and his ear was very close to the ground in all that went on in Zanzibar—yes, and all the East Coast for that matter.

that the population of Zululand was 250,000 but this did not include Zulus living in Natal.

Natal generally administered Zululand in a very fair and impartial manner. Certainly this administration was greatly for the good of the natives in many respects. Witchcraft practice—one of the greatest curses of the country even at the present day—was penalized; putting to death without trial of any kind, was stopped; marrying off girls without their consent and slavery in any form were both put to an end. On the other hand, some very absurd and annoying laws were passed. Many of these were most inconsistent and led to the lighting of the bonfire which ended with the rebellion and the great loss of life and property on both sides.

I must now make some attempt to show the tribal system of the Zulus, for this is important. First of all, the Zulus were polygamists. They were divided into many tribes and each tribe had its own chief. Each chief would rule with the aid of old councillors, indunas and probably one or two witch-doctors. In his territory there would be several kraals, villages or communities, each of these being ruled by a headman. They lived in circular huts of bee-hive formation, constructed of wattle, straw and daub. Each wife had her own hut; four or five wives, then four or five huts, plus smaller ones for grain, tools, implements and other things. Around these would be a fence and close by the common cattle kraal or compound.

Each wife was obtained by lobolo or the payment by the bridegroom of so many head of cattle to the

bride's father. Up to quite recently the price was five or six head of cattle, depending on the girl (intombi) and the wealth of the prospective groom.

When a young man married, for a time he continued living in the kraal of his father, his wife having her own hut which she built herself with the assistance of her mother-in-law. Later on, the newly-married couple would move to a site of their own, but this site had to be one approved of by the young man's father and more important still, *by the man's chieftain*.

Here was one source of trouble. As the power of the headmen and chiefs broke down, as the result of the young men being able to appeal against their punishments to the magistrates, so the younger people broke away and became tribeless wanderers, only returning to the kraals when in trouble or in want. *These tribeless men would not pay hut tax to their chiefs.*

The headmen, councillors, indunas and chiefs would have from two to ten or twelve wives, often more. The King having as many as he fancied—without paying lobolo—this being the King's privilege and right, from the days of Tschaka, the Zulu Napoleon.

In the olden days the King had been assisted by a Great Council, which was composed of elderly men selected by himself, chieftains of the great tribes and his leading impi commanders. When, however, the Rebellion broke out there was no Great Council, no King and none to take the place of these; none to whom the people could look with confidence for a lead; that is, except the Governor of the Province of

Natal, who was the nominal Supreme Chief—but then he was a white man.

In the old days, every man, no matter what his age, was under the full control of his father and over him was his chief. At the time of the Rebellion, this parental and chief's control had been broken down by the young men going to work at the mines on the Rand or as far away as Kimberley. It was these "boys" who came back and stirred up trouble. They would go away, work for one or two years in some compound where they would receive board and a certain sum monthly—fifteen shillings to twenty shillings. When the time came for them to return to their kraals, instead of returning with their cash, they would invest it in all sorts of useless truck. Jew's harps, mouth organs, concertinas, top-hats, coats with a huge coloured piece of cloth sewed in the back, any fool thing which took their eye. Then when they got to their kraal they would not have a penny to pay their tax with. These "boys" would be the ones who would say to their chief or headman: "Baba! (father), 'nkose! (chief) why should you pay tax to these whites? Behold, baba! 'nkose! we have lived in the towns of these whites and, truly, father there are many who are not such as the white chiefs in Natal. Many of them are low class, even lower than the 'totties and bushmen (alluding to such low white trash as the Greeks, Italians, Polish and Russian Jews and other such peddlers and scum). Also, father, we know that many of the whites love not the English. Remember, father, how the Boers fought them and how when the

English rode into the Boer country (Dr. Jameson's raid into the Transvaal) the Boers 'ate them up'!"

This was the kind of talk which spread through Natal and Zululand. The "boys" had unfortunately been spoilt, treated as equals by low white trash and got wrong impressions as to the solidarity of the English Colonials and the Boers on the native question.

Amongst the Zulus in the olden days, no woman could own property of any kind. As soon as she was married, she started to work, being not much better than a slave. She was useful as a plaything, to bear children, and then to make way for a younger wife and become a drudge.

Like the old Scottish clans, previous to and as late as 1906, there were still many feuds and bitter enmities among the great Zulu clans, but anything powerful enough soon welded them together. And now through a gross error of the Government—enforcing a higher hut tax—this very thing had been done. Even the most loyal of the Zulu tribes were made disaffected by this measure. There is nothing slow about the Zulu when he makes up his mind to sharpen his assegais and cuts out his great war-shield from an ox-hide. He is then a mad, fighting devil in no time. Using his own words, "he sees red and wants to blood his spear" and waste no time about doing so. No wild, Galway Irishman daring an Orangeman to tread on his coat tails, has anything on the Zulu roused and spoiling for a fight.

On the other hand, there is this to their credit. I have not found any race in all Africa—I might say in

the world, and I have travelled over most of it—more courteous to white men whom they respect, more amenable to discipline or more easily handled, by anyone who really understands them. They are a martial, fighting race and must be treated as such. They are haughty and look down on all other native races as did their offshoot the Matabele, but all Zulus respected, nay, liked the English, though they loathed the Boers. Most people who know, will admit to-day, that the Zulu War of 1879 was a mistake and forced on Cetewayo.

Since the Zulu War and since Natal had taken over the administration, several things had taken place which tended to cause unrest and a hostile feeling among the Zulus. There had been the terrible Rinderpest outbreak in 1897, which swept off half their cattle; this was followed by the tick fever, nearly as bad. These two epidemics, which ran through the whole of South Africa, made the price of cattle so high—an advance of from 1,000 to 1,500 per cent—that few could afford to pay lobolo for marriage.

Then there was the matter of isibalo or forced labour which the chiefs were allowed to enforce in their own areas; young men returning from the mines would no longer do this and incited others to refuse; lastly, there was the increase in rents and in the hut tax which ranged from £2 to £3 per hut. For several years previous to the Rebellion, the high rents of farms had been a burden to headmen. Then there were the excessive fees charged by lawyers when attending to native affairs, plus the enormous interest

the chiefs and sub-chiefs had to pay for mortgages or loans.

I had one headman come to me and ask my advice over a lawyer's charges. It so happened that the attorney with whom he had done business was a man I had at one time used for similar work. This rogue had charged the headman £22 for exactly the same work he had done for me for £1 1s. I knew another instance of an Eurasian attorney who had borrowed money from the Standard Bank of Africa for a chief and obtained the loan for seven per cent. This was the amount the chief paid the bank, but this crooked lawyer had got the chief to put his mark to another document by which he paid the attorney the same amount for "services rendered", "this amount to be paid as long as the loan was in force with the bank".

Into this fertile soil of unrest, was sown the insidious American-Nigger propaganda of Ethiopianism, or "Africa for the Blacks." A deep-seated hatred of the whites got abroad, manifesting itself in defiance and acts of violence. House-boys and rickshaw-boys were becoming insolent, and finally it became almost dangerous for white women to be out after dark.

Things got to be very bad in the neighbourhood of the outlying small towns such as Pietermaritzburg, Newcastle, Stanger and even close to the suburbs of Durban. It must be remembered that before this period it was almost unheard of for a Zulu to insult, let alone molest, a white woman. It was a thing "not done" by this warlike race.

The Colony at this time was feeling the effects of

financial depression, and—short of money—thought of the discarded and discredited Poll Tax Bill.

This Bill imposed a tax of one pound per head on all unmarried men and fourteen shillings on the married. Next, the Government proceeded to take a census. Now, there is nothing that ruffles a Zulu quicker than any inquiries about, or interference with, his family or belongings. It is distinctly “not done”, and the Zulus won’t have it. At least, not without a fight.

They felt that the Government must have some underlying motive, and this was made much of by the American Nigger Missionaries—so called. When the matter was being explained by a magistrate at an indaba (council—big talk) of chiefs, held at Greytown, a chief present asked: “What guarantee have we that after the Government have counted us, they do not intend to use this information to do us great harm at some future date?”

Fate was working against both sides, leading to more misunderstandings and bloodshed. Early in the summer of the same year, all the Kaffir corn was attacked by blight. Neither the white farmers nor the natives could understand it, nor had anyone known this kind of blight before.

Word was now spread around that Dinizulu had caused the blight, because the tribes were no longer loyal to his Royal House, and that he had made powerful mouti (magic) to kill the mabele crops. (Mabele was the grain used by the natives to make twala, or native beer.)

On top of all this, one of the worst hail-storms ever



known in South Africa swept the country on May 31st. The hailstones were the size of very large hens' eggs. It devastated the whole Colony. The destruction to property was enormous; the loss of life, especially amongst the native population, quite heavy. The strangest rumours spread like lightning among the Zulus in Zululand and Natal. So curious were these, that one could not help listening to them, absurd though they were. But anyone understanding the Zulu trend of thought had to consider them seriously. Some of these rumours—especially the following one—may tend to clear the mystery which hangs around the real cause of the Rebellion.

All these rumours, which were really in the form of a command, came from a personality never made known, even until to-day. In spite, however, of the absence of actual proof, there was not the least doubt in the mind of anyone who knew the inside of Zulu affairs, that all these originated with Dinizulu. These rumours or commands mentioned no time, no place or even district. All that was ever known was that the command—fiat would be really more correct—had gone forth from some person in supreme authority. They spread, by word of mouth, rapidly—almost like the insane chain letters of civilization—but they demanded instant obedience lest a terrible fate befell the hearer. This fate or sentence would come from the "ghosts". This message, fiat or command was much as follows:

"All swine must be destroyed at once, all pure white fowls (evidently intended to signify white people); also

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every utensil purchased from or even belonging to, a white person. Failure to comply instantly with this command would mean a complete wiping out of the offending kraal; men, women and children and animals, by a storm which would be sent by HIM, and this would be many times more terrible than the last which was sent as a partial punishment and a warning."

This really was a message that all whites were to be destroyed, because pigs were never eaten by Zulus. Every Zulu in Natal and Zululand now knew that a rising was to take place, and a complete massacre of the whole white population.

It must be understood that, to the Zulu mind, the King was also ruler of the heavens and ruler of all its powers. He could make or withhold rain, cause storms and lightnings, so all the Zulu people expected these storms to be brought to help them in their work of "stamping-out" the whites.

Can it now be wondered at that chiefs and elders living in Natal—outside Zululand—should have drawn the conclusion that all these commands and rumours came direct from the King, Dinizulu himself, the last of the great Royal House of Tschaka? Since Dinizulu made no attempt to stop them it was even rumoured that Tschaka's spirit had been seen and spoken to by some of the Izaunsi.

Big chiefs like Mveli who lived close to Pietermaritzburg; Myambo and Ndunque who lived close to the large Reynolds sugar plantation near Stanger; Tilonko, Md'Ilovo, Mtele, Sikukuku and several others,

thought it necessary to ask Dinizulu if he had sent the "Word". Zulus—like our politicians—have a way of talking "dark", and his answer might have meant anything the hearer wished to hear.

Under the old Zulu regime, there would have been no room for the slightest doubt. The King would have issued his orders, and they would have been carried out instantly, but owing to the terms of his freedom under the Natal Government, Dinizulu dared not come out into the open. He was afraid to let his name be definitely coupled with the unrest and more especially with the fiats or commands.

In the district of Weenen ("Place of weeping", where a party of Boers had been slaughtered in olden days by the Zulus), a district ruled by the chiefs Selwana and Ngqam-buzana, the district magistrate traced, tried and convicted three natives of spreading rumours of sedition amongst these two great tribes, who had a total of 60,000 people.

By now, the most casual and most uninterested of people must have noticed the total change in the temper of the Zulus in Natal and Zululand. They were filled with what the Zulu calls *qunga* (a dark, vengeful spirit making the face of the person scowling and forbidding), which is characteristic of all negro peoples under abnormal conditions. Magistrates, police and other officials were now treated with the utmost contempt.

Dinizulu's connection with all this was subtle and clever. He was no longer a Zulu in his way of thinking, but that abomination, a black aping and wanting to

be a white. Unluckily for him, at St. Helena he had been treated by the Governor—who did not understand natives—as another Emperor Napoleon in exile. When Dinizulu came back to Natal, neither civilized nor a savage, but just a spoilt nigger, he had a rude awakening in the treatment he received. He lived in Eschowe—close to the Natal-Zululand border for two or three months and here he made himself a perfect nuisance. He had been accorded semi-royal courtesies in exile at St. Helena, and he had the audacity to expect the same nonsense from the local Government officials and white men with whom he came in contact. Twice he was in the little town, so drunk that he could not stand and whilst in this condition had trouble with the townspeople. Finally, on the representations of all the white residents and officials of the district, he was told that he must remove his residence into Zululand. This he did, going to his own tribe near Nongoma.

Here he started to go on the down grade very fast. He changed in rapid stages from a Christian to a free thinker, from the head of a church of his own, to an unabashed practitioner of wizardry and witchcraft—a witch-doctor. He married a dozen wives and kept another dozen concubines. One was said to have been white—a Neapolitan woman. He drank heavily, wore nondescript clothes, and grew to be an indolent sot. He was allowed £500 a year by the Natal Government, in addition to what was left of his own patrimony. He grew to be enormously fat, so huge indeed, that he could only walk assisted by a retainer on

either side of him. Obesity, however, is an affliction from which all his Royal House have suffered. Tschaka, Pamba, Dingaana, and Cetewayo, all grew to an enormous size late in life.

On November 22nd, 1905, all Magistrates were told to inform the natives in their districts, that the Poll Tax would be collected and must be paid on January 26th, 1906. Now came the first flash of lightning, heralding the coming storm. A farmer named Harry Smith, of the Umlaas district, took all his boys to the Camperdown District Magistrate to pay their tax. On their return the same evening, one of his boys called to him, as he stood on his stoep, saying: " 'Nkose, a letter has arrived." Smith stepped off the stoep to take it, and received an assegai in the breast which killed him.

On January 22nd, 1906, at Mapumulo, Mr. Dunn, the Magistrate, went to the store of a man named Allan to collect the tax from any Zulus in that area who might come in to pay it. Soon after Dunn got to the trader's store, a chief named Ngobizembe, came in with seven hundred and fifty of his tribe, all armed with kerrie sticks and carrying shields. Sitting down in a circle, they placed these by their sides. This was the very grossest breach of etiquette, even amongst themselves. When asked by Mr. Dunn if they had come to pay the tax, they called out with one voice: "No, no, we will not pay." Then silence.

I knew Mr. Dunn very well and there was not a man in all Natal who knew more of the Zulus, more of their habits, manners and *ways of thinking* than Dunn, the

magistrate. I always remember a peculiar watch charm which he carried. It looked like a dried-up tip of a monkey's finger. It had a gold band around the top of it, with a tiny link with which it was attached to his watch-chain. I once asked him what it was and this is what he told me. "Just before the fight at Isandhwala, I was out scouting and ran into three Zulus, an induna and two warriors. They rushed me but I killed the two men before they could get to close quarters. The induna stabbed my horse which fell and then I was on foot, man to man with only my sword against his assegai and shield. He stabbed me twice before—more by good luck than anything else—I killed him. This little charm is a memento of that fight. It's the top joint of his little finger which I had sliced off during the scrap."

From behind, where Mr. Dunn was sitting facing the tribesmen who refused to pay their tax, there now came five hundred more, these advancing and—ominous sign—*chanting their war songs*: all being dressed in war-dress, fully armed, with war-shields—as distinct from the small hunting shield—and carrying assegais and war knobkerrie sticks. All this was in direct disobedience to the native laws. Mr. Dunn was—as I have already shown—a man of great pluck; when they failed to salute him, he cried out to them: "Umfanès, (boys, gross ridicule to grown-up men) have you not learned to salute your superiors? Are you just bad-mannered Bushmen?"

They shouted as one: "We salute you no more. We salute no whites."

These men now sat down in a half circle facing the other crowd of Zulus, thus completing a circle round the whites, who consisted of Mr. Dunn, Allan, a police-sergeant and six Nonqais—native Zulu police.

The whole crowd of armed natives now started shouting insults at the whites. Mr. Dunn told me afterwards that he never expected a man of his party would get out alive. He said that the way the native police acted was splendid. They just stood there like statues waiting his word but never showing the least concern.

Some of the more truculent of the Zulus now got up and started a war dance. This was the signal for some of the youngsters to begin threatening Mr. Dunn and the other whites with their assegais. Mr. Dunn told me that two men held assegais against the chests of himself and the police-sergeant, a man named Burgess, and told them that they were going to cut them up slowly.

Burgess said to me, some time afterwards:

"You can take it from me, Crad, that if I live to be a hundred I shall never be closer to death. I knew I dared not move, dared not show any sign of fear. Yet I was in a ghastly funk. I was looking straight into the eyes of one of the devils who was pressing his spear against my chest. His eyes seemed to fascinate me. I could actually see the will in his eyes, the craze and longing to kill."

Mr. Dunn not only spoke Zulu as fluently as any one of them, but had lived so long amongst them that he thought Zulu. Keeping up a continuous flow of

talk, he got them talking and it was not long before three headmen and chiefs interfered and drove the blood-thirsty youngsters back. The wonderful tact, courage and unflinching nerve of Mr. Dunn saved his own life and that of every man in his party.

Sergeant Burgess told me: "There was Mr. Dunn, a man getting on for sixty, taking it just as calmly as a man of thirty. He smoked the whole time, treated them in a bantering manner and yet all the time was throwing out veiled hints—talking dark—of what fools they would be to kill them and the price they would pay. Nerve? Why, that magistrate had nerve enough for a whole troop. I take my hat off to him. I was scared stiff."

After a great indaba (talk), they all marched off, but once more shouting that they would not pay any more taxes nor would they salute any more magistrates. Similar scenes occurred at Insuze and Umvoti in which other tribes were involved. At the end of January, 1906, Ngobizembe, the chief whose men had threatened Mr. Dunn, was ordered to appear at Pietermaritzburg, and a troop of Natal Mounted Police under the command of Inspector Dimmick was sent to Mapumulo. Another big chief, Nkandhla, had also made a violent demonstration in front of the Magistracy of his District.

On February 8th, Sub-Inspector Hunt, with eleven mounted police, was sent from Richmond to Thornville Junction to apprehend a small party of armed natives. He stopped the night at the house of H. Hosking, the natives being reported as close by.



Next day, strongly against Hosking's advice, he went after his men at their kraal. He and his men had just captured and handcuffed a native named Mjongo, when Trooper Armstrong shouted: "Look out, here's an armed party coming." This was a party of nearly a hundred fully-armed Zulus.

The police now began to retire, the natives following; shouting and yelling, taunting and jeering at the police as cowards. Darkness came on, and the Zulus rushed them, two seizing Hunt's bridle. He drew his revolver and fired, killing them both. Fighting now became general. Hunt and Armstrong were stabbed until they were only a mass of hacked flesh, Sergeant Stephens was badly wounded. The rest fought their way through, several horses being badly cut up by assegais. *Hosking at once left with his family and drove into the city.*

A large force of police under Inspector Link was at once sent to recover the bodies. They got these on the twelfth. Hunt's body had eighteen assegai wounds in it, and Armstrong's twenty-two, but these two had not been mutilated. This body of natives took refuge in the great Enon forest.

## CHAPTER SIXTEEN

IN 1902 a bill was introduced into the Natal House of Commons by Mr. Thomas Watt of Newcastle (afterwards Sir Thomas Watt) in favour of military conscription. This was carried unanimously and became law in 1903. Service was to be for three years, for all men under the age of fifty-five. This gave the State 5,000 men for active service and 15,000 reserves.

Mobilization took place under the Act, first at Pietermaritzburg in February, 1906, and was followed by others on April 19th, May 3rd and lastly at Mapumulo on June 19th. The first outbreak of the Rebellion took place on February 8th, 1906. Field batteries were established at Mapumulo, Thring's Post and Nkandhla. I reached Natal from America about the third week in January, 1906, and at once joined up with the Natal Mounted Rifles at Durban.

After general mobilization, it being seen that Natal could not possibly put all the men in the field that were needed, other forces were raised, one needing particular mention. This was a force raised by Lieutenant-Colonel Royston and known as Royston's Horse. My foster-brother, H. S. Pates, was a trooper in it and many of the details of the fighting in which

this regiment took part, I got from Pates. Royston got permission to raise his regiment in March, 1906, when things began to look very black indeed. Recruiting for Royston's Horse was carried on in Johannesburg, East London and Cape Town. Being known as an officer with an exceptionally fine record—he had served in several African campaigns and held the C.M.G., and the D.S.O.—he had no difficulty in getting the right kind of men. At its peak, this splendid regiment numbered 900 men who were mainly from Cape Colony and the Transvaal.

Added to the Natal Forces, were the native levies raised and commanded by their own chiefs. These were all armed with their native weapons—assegais, kerrie sticks and shields. The chiefs who raised levies of their own were Sibindi—alongside whose levies I fought, and fine men they were—Sitshisili and Mveli. I must also mention the fine corps raised and equipped at his own expense by Sir Abe Bailey, the Transvaal Mounted Rifles and a contingent from Cape Colony of five hundred men with Maxims, these being manned by the famous Cape Mounted Rifles.

The attack on the Natal Police at Thornville Junction on February 8th, had come as a thunderbolt to most people in the Colony who lived in the large towns but not to those living in the country.

Two prominent members of the Ethiopian movement were among those in the outbreak wherein Hunt and Armstrong were killed. These two Zulus were Makanda and Mjongo, and their names stand out prominently, for there was not the least doubt—in fact

they admitted it—that they instigated and led the whole affair.

Makanda claimed to be a preacher by divine inspiration—he had been at a mission for some time—and “a teacher of a religion that was new, wonderful, inspired by the Black God, and revealed to him by the Black Christ for the Black Man”. He was the local head of the Ethiopians. By this time it was realized by all in Natal that there was serious trouble ahead.

The Militia Act was proclaimed. Mobilization was called for on February 9th—this drew every able-bodied man to the colours or reserves—and martial law was proclaimed on February 10th.

Reports now came in from all quarters of further acts of violence and sabotage; particularly from Mapumulo and Empandhleni, while at places such as Md’Illovo, Ixopo, Richmond and Greytown, farmers and others came in from the surrounding country and went into laager.

It was now known that great Zulu chiefs had sent messengers to all parts of the country, ordering a rising, even summoning their blood brethren in Rhodesia, the Matabele.

The Natal Police Field Force, about one hundred and fifty strong; was now split in two; one part being sent into Zululand, and the other to Mapumulo, this district being very thickly populated with Zulus.

It was now quite imperative that a force should be sent to Hosking’s farm where the first trouble had taken place. To delay, even for a day, was to ask for the fire to spread rapidly. Zulus, when once they have

made up their mind for war, act with amazing rapidity and energy.

Had the first lot of Zulus been able to boast that they had attacked, killed and got away with it, without instant action being taken, then every Zulu in Natal and Zululand would have been in arms, and thousands and thousands of whites massacred. The Swazies would have joined in, and also the Basutos, and Africa would have seen another Indian Mutiny. That is not only my opinion, but that of many of the best men in South Africa at the time.

The whole of Natal's mobilized forces were placed under the command of Colonel—later Major-General—Sir Duncan Mackenzie, C.B., K.C.M.G., J.P., V.D. of the Natal Carbineers. This fine colonial officer had seen service in Mashonaland and the Boer War, where he commanded the famous Imperial Light Horse.

An advance was made on Hosking's farm, known as "Trewirgie", the whole country round being searched during the operation. The force doing this numbered about eight hundred men. Chief Mveli helped in this with five hundred of his men and the Enon forest was well-combed. Two rebels were captured, tried by drum-head court-martial, proved guilty of taking part in the murders and shot in the presence of Mveli and his tribe. This prompt action had the very best effect and caused many loyal Zulus to remain so.

Mveli was held responsible for the actions of his tribe and the capture of the remaining rebels, and the small column moved on to Richmond, arriving there on February 12th.

Strangely enough—it helped the wild, native rumours—Inspector Fayle was killed by a thunderbolt at Henley, a place only a short distance from “Trewirgie”.

The Minister of Native Affairs now commanded a meeting to be held, at which all natives in the Richmond area were to attend. This indaba was to be held on February 13th. The day previously a sub-chief named Tilonko had risen in arms.

The Hon. H. D. Winter, Minister of Native Affairs, a most able man, proceeded to Richmond to hold the meeting, accompanied by the Under Secretary, Mr. S. Samuelson. They found all the whites in laager in a church, which had been surrounded by barbed-wire entanglements.

Colonel Mackenzie arrived at Richmond on the seventeenth, left a detachment to garrison the place and on the nineteenth crossed the Umkomanzi river. At Stuartstown several court-martials were held, when the chiefs Mamba and Miskofeli were tried, found guilty, and heavily fined in cattle.

Round-ups of disobedient chiefs now took place all over the country. They were fined and gradually—as all thought—the country settled down again to quietness.

Trouble now broke out at Mapumulo, Greytown and Stanger, and on March 2nd Colonel Leuchars with his column marched against an impi under Ngobizembe. He opened fire on his kraal at midday at a range of a mile, after giving the chief time to remove all his women and children. The kraal was

soon in a blaze, and the chief and all his men came in and surrendered. He was tried, and fined 1,200 cattle, 5,000 sheep and goats, and removed from his chieftainship. A chief named Meseni was also brought in and fined.

Just before this affair at Greytown I had gone up from Durban to Pietermaritzburg, to join my squadron of the Natal Mounted Rifles. I had taken twenty recruits with me and at Pietermaritzburg had secured remounts and entrained for Greytown. On arrival there, I was ordered to move on to Mapumulo which was being used as a rallying base. From Greytown out to Mapumulo is very hilly and broken country. Ten of my men I left at Greytown and took the other ten with me and fourteen extra horses.

Unluckily we had started rather late in the day and this, added to the fact that the remounts which the men were leading were very restive, caused us to make bad time and I had to make camp when about half-way. Just before dark we noticed groups of natives on some of the kopjes and in consequence passed a far from comfortable night. My men were all new and unknown to me, so not wanting to run any risk of being scuppered, I had half the men on guard the whole night, while I never rested at all but constantly visited the sentries to see that none slept.

At length the night wore away and I was very thankful to see the first tinge of light. The men were all complaining of being cramped and cold; they were very low spirited. You could not blame them. They had gone to bed with a cold and meagre supper and

now had no breakfast. I bucked them up and as they were all colonials except one man—a Welshman—they soon felt better as the sun got up and warmed them.

Then I spotted men advancing towards the kopje and they halted in a clump of trees about five hundred yards away. I realized at once that my position was likely to be a serious one. Apart from not knowing the fighting capabilities of my men, each man had only fifty rounds. The only water we had was the little in our water bottles and there was no cover for the horses, though there was plenty for the men. If the force, which looked like attacking me, was very strong, my only hope was in help coming from Mapumulo.

At length, just as the sun burst over one large hill in its full strength and glory, the Zulus set up a queer, shrill whistling noise which they ended in a chant. They had crept through the thick bush and grass to within a distance of one hundred yards and yet we could not see them. All we could see was a movement here and there in the grass. Half an hour went by, an hour, and we could see no sign of them. One man volunteered to go out and scout. In an hour he came back and reported that he could find no trace of them. I now ordered the men to mount and we started off for Mapumulo. Two hours elapsed before any further sign of an enemy was seen, and then my advance guard came galloping back to say about fifty or sixty men were hidden in a kloof ahead. I dismounted my men at the base of a steep cliff and had no sooner done this than the attacking force was on us. The ground broke



away from our front in such a way, that it made it very difficult for the attackers to charge and they opened out in groups of twos and threes as they came at us.

I made my men hold their fire until they were not more than one hundred yards away.

"Fire!" I cried, and they did with good effect; at least half a dozen fell and then my men kept up independent fire as the enemy continued to rush towards us. Slowly the charge lost momentum and at last to my relief they stopped. I saw one man throw his assegai down as if in rage and walk away. I could not bring myself—at that period at any rate—to shoot the brave chap, but let him go. A few weeks later I would have shot fifty of them. But that was after I had seen some of our men who had been "played with to make mouti". Two hours after I got to Mapumulo and a force was sent after the attackers, but never came up with them. They found eight of their dead, however.

Twenty-four of the rebels who attacked and killed Hunt and Armstrong had now been caught, and were tried before a full court-martial at Richmond. They were defended by an attorney named Jackson, a perfect Zulu linguist and good lawyer. Seventeen were found guilty of public violence, twelve of murder, sixteen of being in arms against the government. Death was the sentence for murder; lashes, imprisonment and fines for the other charges.

The Governor, after careful consideration, confirmed all the sentences and cabled the Secretary of

State for the Colonies to this effect. This was Lord Elgin, who replied:

"Continuance of executions under martial law exciting strong criticism here . . . impress on you need for caution . . . suspend executions until inquired into . . ."

The Governor replied: "Have requested Prime Minister . . . to suspend executions fixed for tomorrow . . . he replied could not . . . I gave orders suspending them . . . he refused and tendered his resignation . . . his colleagues support him."

This action of the Home Government raised a furious outcry not only in Natal but every province in South Africa. Other Dominions were aroused at this unheard of infringement on their rights, and the Governor-General of Australia, cabled the Secretary for Colonies: "Since the intervention of H.M. Minister . . . with the self-governing Colony of Natal would tend to establish . . . dangerous precedent . . . appeal to you to reconsider resolution."

New Zealand—the most loyal of all—also cabled in very strong terms.

The Home Government hastily backed down, realizing that they had stirred up a hornet's nest by their tactless move. Lord Elgin—it was felt by every man in the Colony—had put the Governor in a very bad position. This matter left a very bitter feeling in Natal for a long period.

The murderers of Hunt and Armstrong were shot in Richmond in the presence of a great number of Zulus with their chiefs and sub-chiefs, who were forced to

attend. This was done at exactly twelve o'clock on April 2nd. The men—as was to be expected of so brave a race—met their fate quite unconcernedly, but the execution had a great effect on all natives, and checked the rapid spread of the Rebellion.

Lord Elgin made one more bad break. He cabled the Governor asking for all documents connected with the trial and execution to be sent to him. The Natal Ministers cabled back that, “they had all such documents . . . we request that we may be protected from harassing interference by Ministers or Members of the House of Commons.”

That was the last Natal Ministers heard from the Colonial Office. It helped Natal to join the Union of South Africa.

All this time, a serious state of affairs was developing in the great Impanza valley, situated eighteen miles from Greytown.

As, up to this time, neither Leuchars nor Mackenzie had encountered any serious resistance, all thought that only a small number of Zulus were affected and that the whole rebellion was over, when as a matter of fact we were only at the closing of the first chapter.

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## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

THE second and much more serious chapter of the Rebellion was started in the first week of April, 1906, by a man who was only a petty chief of a small and low class tribe.

This man's name was Bambata. He played such an important part in the Rebellion—taking on his shoulders a rôle which needed a man of the character and calibre of Tschaka himself—that it is necessary to give a full account of his antecedents.

Bambata was born in 1870—or thereabouts—in the Impanza valley. His father was Sobuza, of the small Ngome tribe and his mother, the daughter of a chief of the small Zunu or Czunu tribe. After Bambata's birth, this woman fled back to her own tribe with her baby son, it being claimed by her and her father that the full amount of her lobolo had never been paid. Whatever the reason, Bambata never came back to his father's tribe.

This son on growing up was much addicted to fighting and hated all restraint by his chief, was a fine runner—even for the Zulus—and a great expert at assegai throwing. With an old muzzle-loading musket he became an expert shot. As a chief, he was intolerant, cruel, extremely selfish and a sensualist who

was always obtaining young intombis and refusing the lobolo for them. His principal wife, however, was said to rule him; at any rate, he built her a separate kraal at some distance from his own. The total strength of this man's tribe was less than 5,000, of whom about 700 could bear arms. Bambata formed this 700 into two small impiis.

For a few years previous to 1906, Bambata had taken to drinking spirits and was fast getting into debt, borrowing from lawyers at exorbitant rates of interest. He had twice been convicted of brawling, and fined by the magistrates.

He was ordered to pay his Poll Tax with his men at Greytown on February 22nd at 9 a.m. They arrived at twelve instead, and without Bambata, an induna telling the magistrate that he was ill.

On the same evening, word was received through a friendly and loyal Zulu that, "After the white men have gone to sleep, Bambata will attack with all his impi. There is to be a great stamping-out."

Soon after this a nonqai (native policeman) came in confirming this, saying that Bambata and an impi were hidden in a plantation of trees owned by Dr. Wright, two miles from Greytown.

There was to have been a dance that night. Instead, all went into laager, and the electric lights were kept on all night. Bambata, seeing that Greytown was awake and prepared, now fled into Zululand to the kraal of Dinizulu. There he remained for some time. Dinizulu could not refute this.

On April 3rd, the Natal Mounted Police got word

that Bambata was back in the valley. A magistrate now proceeded to the Impanza, accompanied by Inspector Rose of the Natal Mounted Police and four troopers and with one native guide. Near the house of a man named Varty, they were suddenly attacked by a large party under Bambata, all fully armed with their usual weapons but some with rifles and shot-guns.

Though Bambata's men fired a volley, they hit no one, the magistrate and the police retiring; then Bambata and his men proceeded to loot a small hotel and drink all the liquor they could.

A force was now sent to bring in some white settlers and their wives and children. This force was under the command of Inspector Ottley; he had 150 men with him and most of them were Natal Mounted Police.

From here I will tell what happened as it was related to me by a man who took part in the whole affair. This man was a Boer of German extraction by the name of Zook, and I had him under me later in my troop. Zook was a sergeant under Inspector Ottley.

"We reached the Impanza Hotel at half-past five in the afternoon," said Zook, "getting the people out at once and then proceeding back. Well, of course it is easy for any man to criticize after the thing is over. For all that, I think the Inspector made a serious mistake in trekking back that evening.

"I was sent out with an advance guard of twenty men, then there was a connecting file of three men,



next came three carriages filled with the women and children, last a rear-guard of ten men.

"The awkward part was that the convoy had to pass through a dense bush which grew on either side of the road, with a three-strand wire running along each side. This made it really impossible for me to cover any front, as we advanced at this particular part. And this dense bush, with the wire strands on either side of the road, was a good mile and a half long.

"We reached the middle of this at between eighty-three and ninety, then the rear-guard was rushed by a strong force of Zulus shouting their war-cries. They used their old cry of: 'Usutu, 'sutu.'

"Almost at the same moment both flanks were attacked and I could hear the firing from our men. I had no sooner given the order for the men to retire on the main body, than I found we were being attacked by a large force. The road here was very narrow, less than thirty feet wide. We even had difficulty in wheeling, and soon found that we were so hemmed in with bush, wire and the enemy, that it was all we could do to cut our way through. Luckily for us we were armed with sabres as well as bayonets. You know, sir, how useless a bayonet is in close quarters against an assegai, and that even a sword is not much better against a man with assegai and shield. In the dark I got in a cut on a Zulu's shield and the jar nearly broke my wrist. Those shields take a lot of cutting through. The dark must have handicapped them as much as it did us, for I finally got back to the main body with the loss of only four men killed and every

man wounded. It was a marvel any of us reached the main body alive.

"Inspector Ottley had halted the column at the first attack, then volley-fired into each side of the bush bounding the road. A good many of the Zulus seemed to have been armed with rifles and guns, but they were such vile shots that not a man was wounded with these. Several, however, were wounded by the throwing assegais and one lady had a slight wound in the shoulder.

"These rebels, it turned out, were commanded by Bambata in person, assisted by his chief induna, Cakijana. The first attack being beaten off, the Inspector ordered the column to advance again, all men dismounted and with fixed bayonets, the enemy following through the bush and firing intermittently.

"The camp was not reached until four o'clock in the morning, when all arrived thoroughly played out, especially the ladies, who had all begged to be shot if the worst came."

Bambata, with the support of Dinizulu, who remained in the background, had determined to start a general Rebellion; there was no doubt of this now.

One man's body, that of Sergeant Brown, was recovered two days later with no less than twenty-seven assegai wounds in it. I saw this body, and it was a terrible sight. The whole of both lips had been cut away, also the ears and nose. The left forearm had been cut off, and a great gash in the form of a cross made in his stomach, the entrails and intestines being pulled out.

This mutilation was done with a definite object; to obtain certain parts of the flesh for the purpose of mouti (medicine). Attached to Bambata's force was a man named Moses, whom the writer had the pleasure of seeing killed after the fight at Mome Gorge. This swine was as black as the ace of spades, blacker than any Zulu, more like a Mashona, but was actually an American Nigger from Harlem, New York City. He had for some years carried on "Ethiopian Mission" work, for the good of "Black Christians". He now called himself "Chaplain of Bambata's forces". He had been present when at least two whites had been captured and tortured so when he was taken he was shot "while attempting to escape".

After the attack on the convoy of women and children, Bambata fled to the Nkandhla forests, across the Tugela into Zululand, but he soon returned, and word was received that he was in the rugged country around Mome.

This was the country of the powerful old chief Singananda, a man of great age, too old to have any control over his people. He was reputed to be 106 years old.

It was now reported that Bambata had 1,500 men with him and that more were constantly joining him. Then word came that Singananda had joined Bambata, with men from the chiefs Ndube, Mpumela and Gayede. His force was said to amount to 5,000 men.

Columns under the command of Colonels Mansel, Vanderplank, van Rooyen and Weighton were converging on his forces at the mouth of the Mome Gorge.

On May 1st, Bambata was attacked, but he cleared out in the direction of Nomangoi, about two hundred cattle being captured and some kraals being set fire to in the advance.

Shortly after, Captain Gray in advance, on the Ndindindi ridge, was suddenly charged by a body of Zulus, but his men (Natal Carbineers) were steady, met the charge with a heavy fire, killed several, then fell back on their squadron, while two fifteen-pounders of the Natal Artillery shelled their position, forcing the enemy to retire again.

On May 3rd, Magistrate Stainbank was murdered; about this time a force of the rebels was found at a place called Bobe. I was then acting with Captain Blaney's troop of the Natal Mounted Rifles, in a column, nominally under Major Campbell; our total of all ranks being 430 Europeans, 90 Zulu Native Police, and 500 of a native contingent, wearing red bands round their heads. We had just passed Sikundeni's Store, where the road ran through a small part of the forest.

I was scouting ahead of the advance guard with a force of ten white troopers and ten Nonqais—native police with a white sergeant. The position was something like this. First, well in advance, say three miles, there was myself and my ten white scouts spread out to cover a front of nearly a mile; half a mile behind my screen was a connecting file of two Nonqais and then a screen of Nonqais under their sergeant. Then came the main column with flankers out on each side and a small rear-guard.

I came on a deep hollow, with a smooth slope all round it up to the surrounding hills. On the far side of the slope and on our extreme right was one knoll which stood out like a lump of loaf sugar. In this hollow, amongst some reeds in a swampy place, I came across indications which convinced me that a force had been there recently. For instance, I found places where two fires had been built recently and then hidden under pieces of turf which had been cut out before the fires had been made. Why take all that trouble to hide the fires? Then in the reeds I found a small duiker-horn, filled with new mouti. Why duiker-horn with new mouti in it? Not to pay taxes with I was sure. Lastly in the reeds, wrapped up in an old piece of blanket and evidently lost or overlooked were three new assegai heads sharp as razors.

I sent back word of what I had found, reporting that I was convinced that a large body of the enemy was in the vicinity.

Captain Blaney now received orders to occupy the knoll on our extreme right front. This was about 2 p.m. At the same time orders came to me to turn over my job and take charge of fifty levies under a sub-chief and accompany Captain Blaney with his troop of twenty-five men. When about three hundred and fifty yards from the base of the knoll, we came on a body of nearly three hundred Zulus in the long grass, which was almost as high as our saddles. These warriors rose with shouts of "'sutu, 'sutu," and charged us, waving and brandishing their spears. Our advance party fired a volley at them and then

warriors as they were, stand any longer against this terrible hail of fire?

It was the first experience for eighty per cent of them. They were certainly not cowards, for the foremost of the charge, a little, shrivelled keshla man (one wearing the head-ring) was lying, almost blown to bits, less than twenty yards from our firing line.

The rout had begun on our front and was completed here. That fine body of fearless, charging warriors—rebels though they might be—which but a few minutes before had swept forward fully confident that our bullets would turn to water, as they had been told when “doctored”, was in full retreat, broken up into wildly fleeing groups, scattered like frightened sheep.

I, for one, was not sorry to see the last of them. It was late and we were all played out, and the heat was intense. Then came serious news. The enemy had rallied and had been heavily reinforced. They now appeared to be in such strength, that Colonel Mansel—who had arrived with 600 men as reinforcements and assumed command—gave the order to retire on Fort Yolland. It was estimated that the enemy lost over one hundred and sixty killed, we never knew how many wounded; we lost six killed and eighteen wounded.

It was during this action that I saw Captain Blaney perform an action exactly similar to that for which Lord Beresford got the V.C. during the Zulu War, in '79.

When the rebels had charged us, and in one place .

got to close grips, one of our men foolishly broke from our line and fought his way amongst them. He fell badly wounded and was not missed for several minutes after the Zulus retired. Then it was noticed that a group of Zulus were carrying a man away with them. At first it was thought it was one of their own men they had on the shield. Then someone saw, through his glasses, that it was a white man. Not hesitating for a second, Blaney mounted his horse and charged full at the group; cut down one or two of them; dismounted, drove the remainder off with his revolver, got the wounded man on his horse and running beside it, with assegais being flung at him, brought the wounded man back to our ranks.

On May 24th, I was sent to Colonel Leuchar's column, which was moving into Zululand—the chief Sibindi met us with his levies in the Mpukunyoni hills, eight miles west of the Qudeni range.

In Matchana-ka-Mondise's district, the chief Matchana was loyal, but his sons had all joined the rebels. These sons of his had all been to work on the Rand, and had returned inoculated with all the rot and vice which the native could pick up around the illicit, native rum-shops. The old chief furnished us with guides when the column moved off at mid-day.

I was sorry for this old man, for owing solely to what had been done by his sons, he was twice arrested and heavily fined, though after the Rebellion was over and it was proved that the old chap had been no party to any seditious or rebellious work, all the cattle

he had paid as fines were returned to him with a handsome reward in addition.

Had it not been for men like him and Sibindi, there might have been a different tale to tell, for their tribes were strong and the fact that they had joined in the Rebellion would have brought in many smaller chiefs who were sitting on the fence.

Late in the afternoon, another body of Sibindi's men joined us, bringing his total number of men up to nearly two thousand. It was a stirring sight to see them march into camp. They looked as fine as any lot of fighting Zulus or Matabele I had seen.

Every man wore a red band round his forehead and the captains, sub-chiefs and indunas had a red band round the right arm. All were completely armed with their own weapons, but Sibindi himself carried, in addition, a rifle and wore a revolver strapped around his waist. He was a tall man, even for a Zulu.

That night we laagered in a square and I can honestly say that I was in a mortal funk the whole night through. It was a beastly experience.

You see, it was like this. The east face of the square was made up of two squadrons of the Umvoti Mounted Rifles and these used their saddles as a stockade, breastwork or whatever one liked to call the flimsy affair. One squadron of the same corps with a small number of nonqais (native police) and one squadron of the Omvoti Mounted Reserves were on the south side, while Sibindi's levies made up the other two sides of the laager.



Now up to this time, though Sibindi had been loyal and had helped in a small way, he had not been in a position where he could turn suddenly and help in massacring a whole column. For that is what it meant now. Suppose that we were rushed in the early morning or at night, by large forces of the enemy, and whilst we were engaged, Sibindi ratted. What chance should we stand? Not an earthly. Every man would be wiped out. This was in my mind all that night. I was very nervy.

At 7.30 p.m. our scouts came in and reported an impi of close on two thousand moving in the direction of the high hills. This force was evidently getting away from Colonel Mackay's column.

About 10 p.m., a native scout arrived from Colonel Mackay's column, warning Colonel Leuchars that he must be very careful, as two other enemy impis were in the vicinity and that he might expect an attack.

We all stood to arms at four o'clock, and at 4.30 a.m. I was ordered to take six scouts out to reconnoitre to our left, while Lieutenant Nuss went out with a party to our right. Almost simultaneously we ran into bodies of the enemy, firing on them to give the alarm, then riding back to report.

I got in at 5.45 a.m. with my men, and Nuss at six. As Nuss rode in we could hear the deep booming shout of "Usutu, 'sutu," as the enemy advanced.

By this time, the whole force was standing to. It grew lighter and lighter as the sun dispersed the morning mist. A swirl of wind now lifted the whole of it

## AFRICAN ODYSSEY

like a huge curtain, and I could see the impi as it swept forward—a phalanx of shields, bristling with assegais. A black impi, a naked impi, looking like the Zulu warriors of old, streamed rapidly over the ground at a range of 1,000 yards from the square.

They swept from sight into the dry bed of a small river, while a smaller impi of about eight hundred men could be seen—really a horn of the old Zulu attacking formation—sweeping to the rear of our square as if to attack from a vlel on our west.

A third force—really the other horn—swept down from the other side to engage the north side of the square.

In the dry bed of the river, Colonel Leuchars had placed the captured cattle under some herd boys. The impi sweeping into this, yelling their war cries, stampeded the cattle, driving them ahead of their advance. The cattle emerged from the gully, charging on our square, and followed by the Zulus.

Order was now given to fire, and at the first volley about sixty cattle fell, some of them less than ten yards from the square's face. This, however, turned back the cattle, and showed that many of the enemy had been brought down. They checked their rush, and proceeded to encircle the square; keeping well under cover, however. Again and again they tried to rush us, the last three times being on the front where Sibindi's men were; but each time they were driven back.

composed. Each brave to recklessness, each cool and collected, yet each showing a distinct manner of fighting.

The Militia Reserves, of whom ninety-five per cent were Transvaal Dutch, had their horses saddled, in accordance with the practice of their great fighting ancestors, who had fought the Zulus so often. If pressed too hard and in jeopardy of annihilation, they would mount, retire to another ridge and rake the enemy with their deadly fire. The Rifles were ninety per cent Scotch and English; cool as could be, dogged as a bulldog, each man was on the ground, behind his saddle, there to fight to the end as did Wilson's men. Nothing would make them budge.

Sibindi's men—Zulus—were standing steady, but plainly excited. Gesticulating, waving their assegais or kerrie sticks, they yelled defiance and were plainly aching to charge at the enemy.

These again came on, now in true Zulu formation, horns well deployed from the main body to the right and left in the way Tschaka had first drilled his invincible impis. Their aim was to encircle our square, closing in so that none could escape and eventually to massacre every man.

Whilst all these attacks had been made, it was observed that Sibindi and his captains were having the greatest difficulty in restraining the levies from rushing to the attack each time the enemy retired.

I now received orders to reinforce one side where the levies were, with twenty men, whilst the same was done

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to the other side. Whilst all this had been going on, we had been suffering from two or three enemy snipers who knew how to use their rifles. These were about eight hundred yards from the square. Up to now, our total casualties had been twelve whites killed and wounded and forty-one of Sibindi's men; and more than half of these were hit by sniper's bullets. Many of the horses had also been hit.

A deadly, raking fire was now ordered in the direction of the snipers, which silenced them. Afterwards we found two of them dead. The third, a man named Magadize, escaped.

At about nine o'clock, an order was given to Sibindi to hold his men in readiness to charge. This had a perfectly magical effect. They had not understood this, "sitting down to fight" game, which we were playing. Now an excited jabbering and the rattling of assegais against shields told those of us who knew them, that they would give the enemy something in return for what they had suffered.

They had loathed sitting in the grass and being fired at, conforming to a way of fighting which went against all their training and instincts.

At about ten-thirty the enemy delivered another but much weaker attack, quite half-hearted. I saw Sibindi get the order. His face lit up with a blaze of fighting lust. He positively roared his commands to his indunas; they repeated them—and as their fathers had done in previous fights—shouting the war-cry 'sutu, 'sutu, they leapt forward like hounds after the now retreating enemy.

The rebels fled down by the waterfall, others down the dry gully, some over the ridge—and everywhere could be seen Sibindi's men—red bands round their heads—hot in pursuit. I never heard exactly how many of the rebels they accounted for, but heard figures quoted from twenty to one hundred and fifty. Personally I think the last nearer the mark. The Zulu does not soon let up on a flying foe.

A squadron of the U.M. Rifles was sent to help the pursuit of the large body that had made off in the direction of Mpukunyoni, and these came on a deserted kraal where the enemy had left large supplies and nearly 1,000 head of cattle.

The dead counted in front of the square—nearly all the wounded were carried away—in the dongas and in the scrub, totalled 184, but this, of course, does not include those killed by the Sibindi levies. Amongst the enemy killed was an induna named Bobazelendi, the principal induna commanding the fight. Many killed were not found for weeks after, and are not included in the total above.

The attacking force were men of the Faku, Mtele and Makafulu tribes, a very large number of them being Christians. One carried on him a certificate showing he was a "licensed preacher" of the Gordon Memorial Mission.

We now returned to Buffalo; Sibindi's men marching in great glee. Those who had killed and blooded their assegais, carried them, with the blood still on, blade upwards, as is their custom. They also bound green rushes to their heads. When close to their kraal

of Nyoniyezwe, they started chanting their ancient tribal song.

The sun had set, dusk had come, and the women, recognizing that their men were returning triumphant, victors with blooded spears, came running from all directions, according their heroes such a weird, wild and fantastic welcome, that I shall never forget it. It was the first and only time I had ever seen Zulu womenfolk receive a victorious impi.

Most of the women had their faces plastered with white ashes, and carried small hand brooms. They had leaves bound to their ankles, and rushed towards Sibindi's men, screaming in shrill, hysterical voices:

"Ki, ki, ki, ki, kuhle 'kwetu." Roughly (oh, oh, oh, oh, welcome, joy is in our huts).

That night the column laagered at the kraal of one of Sibindi's indunas, a man named Sikota. The following day I was sent with ten men of the N.M.R., and ten of the U.D.R. and twenty levies to bring in six hundred head of cattle reported to be not more than fifteen miles away in a deserted kraal which had been used by the rebels.

Arriving there I found no sign of the cattle, but every indication that the enemy were about in force. At the moment I was speaking to the chief man of the levies, when I noticed some of the enemy in the thick bush close by.

I now ordered the men to extend over to a small kopje and rode off to the left of my line. I had no more than reached there when a man sprang up from the

long grass and fired point blank at me from an old musket, the slug slightly wounding my horse in the withers. At the shot, the enemy seemed to spring out from all parts and charged at us. One of my troopers gave a horrible, gurgling shout as a throwing assegai hit him clean in the throat.

To my surprise, every one of the levies bunched as hard as he could go; I now called to the troopers to rally on the kopje, at the base of which were many large rocks. Throwing myself behind one, I emptied my magazine twice into the Zulus, and this gave time to the troopers farthest away, to get to me in safety.

One man was in difficulty and surrounded by five rebels. With the assistance of two troopers I charged this lot and got him into our ring, the two troopers gallantly fighting the Zulus off with their bayonets, giving me time to retire. The enemy now left us alone for a few minutes, and I gave the order to mount and retire.

Now they came at us again, and it looked bad for a few minutes, they were so thick. My revolver was all that saved me, as one of the enemy got hold of my reins, whilst another stabbed at me with his broad stabbing spear.

I got him in the chest, the other in the shoulder. One trooper fell with two assegais in his back, another with one in his stomach and one in his shoulder. All this time we were riding off, but the ground was so rocky and broken that the enemy could travel faster than we could.

I got the men under some cover in a small shallow krantz, but had only eight left now; a few minutes after I was overjoyed to hear the shouts and cheers of a relieving squadron, accompanied by a large number of levies.



# MOME

POSITIONS WHEN  
ACTION STARTED.

RH Royatons Horse  
NC Natal Carbineers  
NP Natal Police  
NDMR Northern Dragoon Mid Rifles  
NFA Natal Field Artillery  
N.D. " Dragoons  
NMR " Mounted Rifles  
ZMR Zululand Mid Rifles  
TMR Transvaal " "

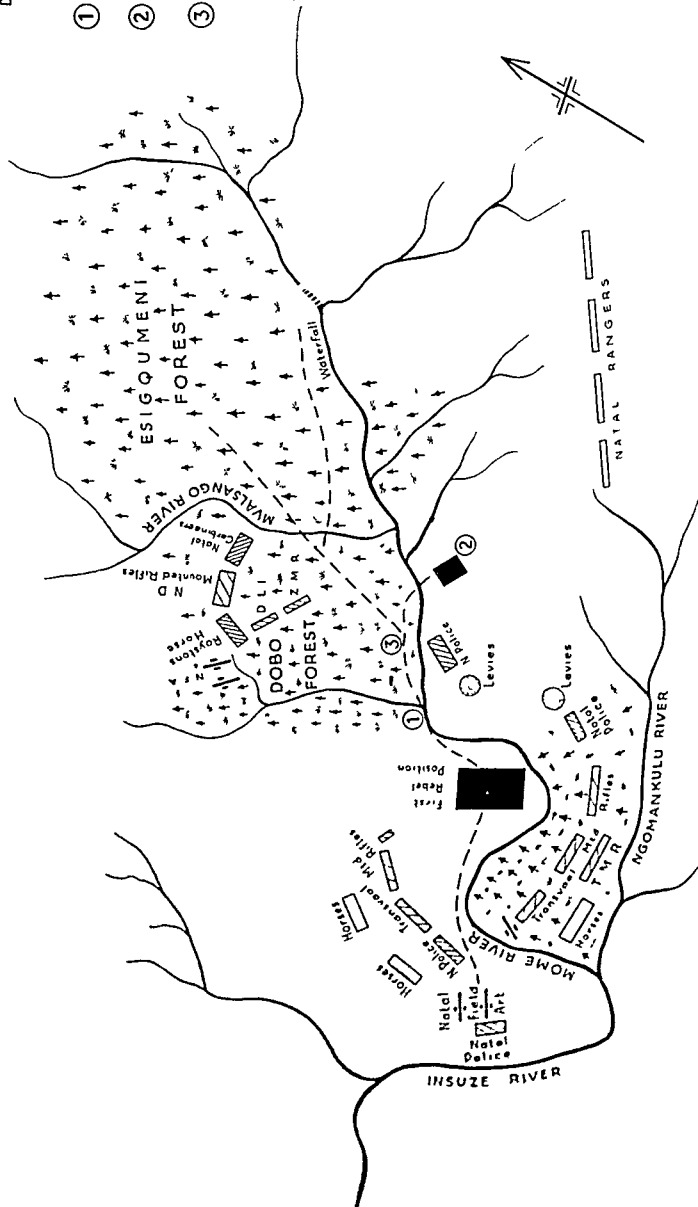
■ Zulus  
▨ SA Forces  
DLI Durban Light Infantry

- ① BAMBAAYA Killed  
② Enemy Retreated Here  
③ MEHLOKAZULU Killed

## NOTE

This is all Mountainous country, densely covered with forest or bush.

Scale Roughly  
750 YDS to INCH



## CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

TO my mind—and I know that this was the general view of the different officers commanding regiments—the battle of Mome Gorge was the most interesting affair of the whole Rebellion. Major General Duncan Mackenzie was the officer in supreme command and superbly he handled the whole affair. Luckily for me, I had joined his column four days before the fight took place. I had been sent to him with some important dispatches.

If my description of the fight is followed with the map attached, I think the reader will have no difficulty in understanding the affair, but it would not be easy to do so without it.

The attack on the rebel forces was made from three points, and at the start these were widely apart. In the centre of our attacking force, were the Transvaal Mounted Rifles, the Natal Reserves, the Natal Field Artillery, a body of the Natal Police (mounted) and a large body of levies commanded by Sibindi. This force was really at the opening of the huge Mome Gorge. On its right was the Ngomankulu river and on the far left the Insuze river.

On the left side of the Gorge—that is the right flank of the enemy—were the Durban Light Infantry,

the Natal Carbineers and Royston's Horse, with two troops of the Zululand Mounted Rifles. The extreme left of our force was a good five or six miles from the nearest body of our centre.

Far to the right of our centre force were the Natal Rangers and some Natal Reserves, these being opposite the Eziwojeni forest and the Mome waterfall.

Most of the previous afternoon had been used in getting the troops in position and, acting as an extra aide for General Mackenzie, I had been in the saddle all that day and half of the night. There had been a glorious full moon and this had been the greatest help to the different regimental commanders in taking up their positions.

So far, all the converging movements had worked like clockwork. So different to the Boer War in which I never knew a night attack or night movement which was not a fiasco.

The action began at daylight when Lieutenant Forbes, in charge of the fifteen-pounders, seeing the enemy forming up in impis—through his glasses—opened fire. Then the Maxims came into play, two more fifteen-pounders and a Colt gun. This was quickly followed by a heavy rifle fire from our main body fronting up the Gorge.

The enemy were thrown into a panic, large numbers began to dash through the nek, in the hope of getting into the open and then into the thick bush. These were met by a devastating fire from men posted for just such a contingency. Some fortunate enough to get through had to run the gauntlet of a heavy cross fire

and few escaped. Their time for a "stamping-out" had come, but they were to be the ones stamped flat.

Many escaped into the Dobo forest. Here must surely be sanctuary. It was nothing more than a mouse-trap; Mackenzie had seen to that. It was surrounded from all sides and eventually cleaned up by Nonqais, levies, and a few white troops.

Singananda was reported to be in the large forest of Mvalsango, to the west of the Mome waterfall. General Mackenzie sent me with an order for the Zululand Mounted Rifles and two companies of the Durban Light Infantry to go through this. They advanced immediately, almost at the same moment the opening or mouth of the Gorge was swept by a combined fire from fifteen-pounders, machine-guns and rifles.

I had no sooner reported back to General Mackenzie, than he sent me with orders for Royston's Horse to guard the Dobo and then to connect with Colonel Barker. Another officer was sent at the same time to the right flank to order the Natal Rangers to advance in an encircling movement. They were to keep their right flank swinging on their left as a pivot.

I seized the chance, after giving Colonel Royston his orders, to advance with him and his men. It was awkward work advancing through the thick bush and as we drove through the Dobo the enemy would jump from clumps like birds put up by beaters. In front and around us was one of the most rugged and wild expanses of country to be found in Natal. A mass of bushy kloofs, of bold slopes, covered with forest or

bush, sweeping away to the high hill tops, breaking here and there into red ironstone. The sun was very warm and the shade I got at times from the tall yellow-wood trees was very grateful. The semi-gloom of the thicker part of the Dobo was enlivened by the shrill piping of birds and I spotted several old baboons about. I expect they were wondering what all the devilish noise was.

My native orderly was riding close behind me, when suddenly my horse pricked forward its ears and gave an uneasy stamp with its off fore-foot. This attracted my attention, just as my orderly called out. There was a break in the forest just at this point. Then a pair of badly-frightened francolins—Cape pheasants—rustled out into the open. There was something ahead they did not like, that was certain.

"They have seen something, Baas," said my orderly. Then from the line of brush in front burst the sound of two shots, my orderly's horse uttered a shrill scream of agony, and rearing up, kicking the air wildly for a moment with its front legs, backward it went, dashing my orderly with stunning force against a large tree trunk. Almost at the same instant four Zulus—with what I took to be at first an officer—dashed from cover, and with bass, roaring shouts and ear-splitting whistles came for us.

My orderly, from the ground, got one man with his rifle, then struggling to his feet killed another with his stabbing spear. The shots, whistles and yells of the attacking men, came so unexpectedly that my horse got out of hand for a couple of moments and took me

among the two Zulus and their chief—dressed in the full uniform of an English officer. A sweeping cut with my sabre and I got one hulking Zulu, who went down with a shattered skull. The man in uniform went down on one knee and took a shot at me but it only hit the pommel of my saddle. The other Zulu, a great, brawny, naked man, hideous with red ochre on his face and two large crane's feathers on his head, a necklet of teeth of some animal round his neck, came dashing at me in a kind of berserk rage, "seeing red" if ever a man did. I let him have a bullet from my revolver; usually I am a poor shot with my left hand, but luck was with me this time. I got him clean. He reeled, spun round, flung his assegai and kerrie stick from him and fell.

All this was a matter of seconds. The man in uniform was now taking another pot shot at me as I charged at him. He was a kingly-looking chap, tall, straight, perfectly-proportioned with the torso of a prize-fighter of heavy-weight class. As I came at him he fired, but like all Zulus, he was a rotten shot and missed. I gave him the point as I went by him, catching him just below where the throat joins the body. The force of my horse charging sent my blade home, through flesh and bone, but my sword was nearly wrenched from my hand as he fell and for a second his body seemed to hang on my sword, as my horse dashed away.

At this moment a lieutenant and some men of Royston's Horse came up. The lieutenant, a local man who knew every foot of the country and everyone in

it—white and coloured—said to me, looking down at the Zulu in uniform:

“Well! Crad, this is very peculiar. Have you any idea who this man is?”

I told him that all I knew was that it was unusual to see a Zulu chief—he was a ringed man, looked every inch a chief—dressed up in an officer’s kit.

“Well! that is a really big chief named Mehlo-ka-zulu. A very important man. You had better let General Mackenzie know as soon as you can.”

The Dobo forest was now being fast cleared of the rebels, the enemy realized that they could hide nowhere, and the Nonqais, with the help of the levies, drove them into the open to be picked off by crack shots. A large body—the N.M. Rifles, Royston’s Horse, Durban Light Infantry and some of the Natal Rangers—now drove towards the Mome Gorge in line of companies.

A horrible blunder was now made by a certain officer in charge of some levies. Seeing that his men were scattering, he ordered the “rally” to be sounded. This was heard by all and obeyed, all thinking the order came from Mackenzie, and large numbers of the enemy escaped, at least three hundred of them. However, among the slain were Mtele, Mavakuto, Paul and Moses, two Christian teachers who called themselves Chaplains to the Black Forces, and Bambata himself.

The death of the rebel leader, Bambata, is reported to have taken place as follows:

Shortly after the influx into the Dobo forest, of the

retreating rebels from the Mome Gorge, and just before the Dobo forest was shelled, an unarmed man was seen walking up the Mome stream. This man was wearing nothing but a shirt, and carrying nothing of any kind.

He was seen by one of the loyal levies who was on the further bank. Behind this loyal levy, was another of his companions, but hidden from the view of the native wearing the shirt. The apparently unarmed man rushed at the levy, drawing a long knife from under his shirt as he came, but before he could attack the other, concealed levy sprang behind the man from the water and stabbed him in the back with his assegai.

The stabbed man turned on his assailant and was then stabbed by the second. He continued fighting and struggling, his strength being enormous; he wrenched a kerrie stick from one, and for a while it seemed as if he must escape. Now three Nonqais came along and one shot the rebel through the head.

They then went off, leaving one assegai—which was badly bent—sticking in the body, not one of them bothering as to who the rebel was they had killed. Not until two days later was it realized that the dead man was Bambata.

To make sure that this man was Bambata, and to stop any rumours of his being alive, two of his headmen were brought from Empandhlini and shown the body. They at once recognized it as being that of Bambata. The head was then cut off and brought to Greytown. This was done as it was most urgent that



news of his death should be spread amongst all the natives. The head was treated with all decency and respect. It was not exposed to view, but kept in a state of preservation by the Medical Officers: no one being allowed to see it without a signed order by the Commander-in-Chief or the Minister for Native Affairs. After several of his relations, sub-chiefs and leading men had seen it, the head was taken to Mome Gorge and buried in the grave with the body.

The enemy losses—those bodies actually counted—in killed, were seven hundred and fifty-four. From enemy sources it is estimated that there must have been a thousand in all, with quite that number of wounded. Our own losses were very small indeed. Fifteen whites killed, eighteen wounded and a few of the levies killed and wounded. This great difference in the losses on the two sides was brought about by the same factors which caused similar differences in casualties at Omdurman in Egypt; the white troops were well-armed, experts with rifles, aided by modern guns and Maxims, and were matched against an enemy armed with savage weapons and ill-disciplined.

To be shot or stabbed in battle is looked upon by the martial Zulus as far better than dying in bed. A Zulu looks with the greatest contempt on the weakling—as he thinks—who shows mercy in war time. Their minds work somewhat like this: Two races, peoples or tribes are at war, so fighting is inevitable; one side must win, and one lose; well, the winning side are fools if they do not “stamp-out” the others. There will be no retaliation then. Wholesale slaughter, utter mas-

sacre is best. Any other way is asking for future trouble.

The situation had now become very grave around Mapumulo. The smashing defeat at Mome—close as it was to the Zulu border, had quashed Rebellion in Zululand and Dinizulu was now lying low, waiting to see what would happen and pretending to be so ill that he was dying and so could not be moved. The Nkandhla and Nqutu districts were now quiet and orderly again.

It had been known for some time that there was certain to be a rising round Mapumulo and a strong garrison was now placed there under Colonel Sparks. He found on his arrival that the tribes of Ndhlovu, Meseni and Ngobizembe were openly in sympathy with Bambata. Around Mapumulo and Ndwedwe there was a Zulu population of more than 100,000 people. The chief Meseni was head of the great Qwabe tribe, senior of all the Zulu clans. Meseni and another great chief, Ndhlovu-ka-timuni were arrested, but foolishly were later released. They promptly broke out in open rebellion in June, in conjunction with chiefs Matshwili, Mlungwana, Swaimana and some smaller chiefs.

On Monday, June 18th, a convoy of three waggons was sent into Stanger from Mapumulo. The waggons outspanned two hundred yards from the deserted and burnt store of Oglesby, near the Otimati river. The next morning they were inspanning—Quartermaster Sergeant Knox was in charge of one waggon with a single trooper—with the others there was a voor-

looper to each span and a white officer was in charge of the whole convoy. Suddenly they were rushed by more than one hundred men of the Ndhlovu tribe. Knox was assegaied in the stomach, the trooper was stabbed again and again, hacked to pieces, while the officer, who was hit with a kerrie stick and received an assegai in the baggy part of his trousers—being a fine runner—out-distanced the Zulus and got to Mapumulo. An attack was made the same day on Thring's Store, and a man named Sangreid killed after being terribly tortured, while another man, Robbins, was left for dead. He had twenty-two assegai wounds, was breathing when found but died a few hours later.

On the officer from Knox's waggons reaching Mapumulo, Captain Smith with a half-troop of the Natal Mounted Rifles galloped to the spot. Near Thring's Post they were charged by close on two hundred of the rebels shouting their war cry. The N.M.R. held their fire until the enemy were within fifty yards, then blazed away. Every man of his troop was a Boer, and a dead shot. That volley checked the charge. The rebels tried flanking, got another volley, this time getting to within five yards. The fire absolutely paralysed them. They then retired, many being bowled over by the N.M.R. as they ran.

Another troop of the N.M.R. now came up, and the combined troops swept the enemy before them up the valley. The two troops of the N.M.R. which did such fine work this day were the Stanger and the Greenwood Park troops; Captain Smith—a very able soldier—in private life was a building contractor. More than



## CHAPTER NINETEEN

I NOW took part in one of the stiffest fights in the Rebellion. This was the action of Peyana, three miles from Thring's Post. Colonel Leuchars had arrived and was Officer Commanding. The force was made up of the following: One section of C Battery, Natal Field Artillery; four Cape Mounted Rifle Maxims; two Maxims and two Rexer guns of the Natal Mounted Rifles, all under Colonel Arnott. There were 450 Natal Mounted Rifles under Colonel Murray-Smith—an accountant in private life—150 Natal Carbineers and 100 Border Mounted Rifles.

This column experienced great difficulty in getting the two guns up the rough inclines. They had a troop of the Natal Mounted Rifles as an escort. I might mention here that less than three weeks before, I had been present in Pietermaritzburg when two hundred remounts had been given to the men, and though they were all good horsemen, it was a sight for the gods. Those horses had just come off a transport and started to show that they needed exercise.

The guns took up a position which covered a front of 2,000 yards of open ground to right and front. The N.M.R. moving forward in extended order in echelon of troops; the ground being very broken and the grass

dry but fairly high. About noon, some of the enemy were observed west of Peyana hill, freely exposing themselves and quite obviously decoys. This told us that the rebels were in force and were in ambush somewhere near Peyana.

Two troops—I was with the one on the left—were now ordered forward to scout before our forces moved down from the ridge and across the open ground. This had a small rivulet and piece of swamp running across it, parallel with our front.

My troop was ordered to advance to the crest of Peyana and draw the enemy. The other troop halted two hundred yards to our rear and supported us as we rode up to the brow of the ridge. As we got to the crest, the enemy rose out of the long grass and charged us with shouts of "Usutu, 'sutu." One or two men had just prepared to dismount and had narrow escapes. We at once retired back on the main body as the enemy swept after us. Coming to the boggy, swampy ground, our horses found it very hard going, and we were retarded so much that the enemy gained on us rapidly. I do not think that there is any race more fleet of foot than the Zulu and now they flew over the ground. My horse was at times sinking well over its fetlocks, and notwithstanding the fact that it was straining every effort, was fast being overtaken. Once it went to its knees and I thought that it was all up.

Taking a glance behind me, I saw that one man was not many feet away, and had actually halted, poised, ready to throw an assegai at me. I turned as full as I

could in the saddle and took a shot at him with my revolver—and hit. It was one chance in a thousand, but a lucky one. I saw an assegai come over my shoulder and stick in the rump of a horse in front of me. It made the poor beast bound forward and nearly unseat its rider.

At last we got through the swampy ground and started up the long slope towards the column. Here we were able to make better time and now drew ahead of the pursuing Zulus. But I could see that it was going to be a very close thing.

It's an uncanny feeling, riding on as fast as your horse will carry you, yet all the time expecting to receive an assegai in the back or between the shoulders. My main dread was that my horse would come a cropper and that I should fall into the enemy's hands.

A vivid imagination is a curse. Instead of concentrating on what my horse was doing, all I could think of was the different men I had seen after they had been played with and tortured by the devils. I suppose it could really be summed-up that I was in a pretty rotten funk. Yet the fighting part never bothered me, at least not as a rule. I could always get a kick out of that.

As we got closer and closer to the column, I could see the gunners waiting to fire and the men lying or kneeling, doing the same. They could not open, so long as we masked the enemy. At last the two fifteen-pounders were able to fire and dropped shells on our pursuers as we rode through our lines. Immediately a

rattling volley rang out from all the dismounted men. Ye Gods! What a time the horse holders had! Those remounts certainly raised hell. It was the first time most of them had heard shell fire.

For those who do not know, I might say that it is usual when cavalry or mounted-infantry are dismounted, for numbers one, two and four to dismount and to hand their reins over to number three, who remains mounted and retires to the rear with the horses. In this instance, to increase our firing strength, a horse holder was often holding six or seven rearing horses and having his hands full.

The fire from rifles, Rexers, Maxims and shells, hit the charging enemy like heavy hail hitting a corn-field, smashing up the charge—a remarkably gallant one—and breaking the enemy into three distinct bodies. One of these withdrew into a deep kloof close by the nek (pass) leading into the open plain across which they had charged. Here there was plenty of thick scrub and bush for cover.

Another cleared off to the left of the Natal Mounted Rifles, going down into a deep valley, but here, as we advanced, we lined the cliffs overlooking the kloof, and were able to bowl them over like rabbits as they reached the bottom of the cliffs and broke for the thick bush. I would hear a man say "let me have this one"; crack would go his rifle, and as the rebel ran, he would be seen to spring into the air and fall. They seldom missed, and were paying off scores for the poor devils of ours the rebels had tortured a few days previously.

Actually, the main body of the charge had been



stopped less than twenty-five feet from the Maxims, and when they found they could not press home their attack, they turned round and walked away. Gallant devils!

Now an order was given for a general advance, and the N.M.R. galloped forward in line of squadrons up the Peyana hill, accompanied by the Maxims on their galloping carriages. Whilst doing this, we came on a body of about five hundred hidden in a slight depression to our extreme right. As these were protected by bush much too deep to ride through, a squadron of the N.M.R. was dismounted and cleared it at the bayonet point.

Soon after a scout rode in and reported an impi in the Mvoti valley, that had not done any fighting up to then. Colonel Arnott now ordered an advance in open order until the Hlonono Mission was reached. The main body of the rebels was seen about two miles away and estimated at between 4,000 and 5,000 strong; they were in a position between the Mission and Meseni's principal kraal, evidently at their old game of an encircling movement. A heavy fire was opened on them from our fifteen-pounders and they retired.

Orders were now given for the column to retire to Otimati. In the course of this, the guns kept unlimbering and shelling the impis whenever they came close enough for the shelling to be effective; this prevented our rear-guard from being attacked.

In July, 8,000 rebels were in one body in the Umvoti valley. Another 4,000 were known to be close to these,

and it was estimated that within twenty miles of Mapumulo, there were at least 15,000 armed rebels. Luckily for Natal, she had the right men in supreme command. Major-General Mackenzie held a winning hand and knew how to play to the best advantage every card he held, and the Government gave him support and co-operation in every possible way, backed by a Governor who was a good soldier himself.

Every man in Natal under fifty-five years of age was now in arms, and though twice it was touch and go, it was a foregone conclusion that the Rebellion was going to be scotched, despite the overwhelming numbers of the rebels, and the encouragement they got from Keir Hardie in the House of Commons.

At MacRae's Store, an action was fought by Major Campbell, D.L.I., commanding a mixed force of about two hundred and fifty men. I was with this small column. We were moving along the low ridge by the store and just ahead I could see a clump of trees between the store and the horizon. Here, let me say that the country was very broken, hilly and with lots of large and small kloofs.

After passing MacRae's Store the road is level and then there is good going as far as Thring's Post. The convoy was making good time, that is for ox transport—about two to two and a half miles an hour. The advance guard consisted of two troops of the Natal Mounted Rifles; I was with one of these troops in which one of the troopers owned a pet lurcher which followed him everywhere. Like all dogs owned by whites, this beast positively loathed all natives. We

were just going up a slight incline when the lurcher stopped dead, raised his hackles and began to howl, just as a dog will do which is being affected by music.

That instant, Zulus sprang out of the clump of trees fifty yards away and charged straight for us. Assegais whizzed about our heads. Two horses were transfixed, they began to plunge and stumble, squealing and causing confusion in the ranks; one man was badly hurt but managed to stick to his horse. . . . Then ducking, and bending low, dodging like lightning to avoid our revolver shots, they hurled themselves among us.

The officer in charge, Captain Armstrong, shouted out to the advance guard to retire, though at the moment he was surrounded. He cut his way to my side. He was as cool and wary in the midst of the *mêlée* as he would have been walking on the Berea. I saw one broad-chested warrior wearing a leopard moocha front and back, with a huge black shield, hurl his kerrie stick at Armstrong; it caught him on the thigh. Armstrong rode at the warrior—a ringed man—to cut him down; swinging up his sabre for a cut at the rebel's shoulder, where the head joins the body. The man saw it coming and raised his shield to ward it off. Armstrong's sword cut clean through the shield and nearly severed the man's head from his body. The strength behind that blow must have been enormous. We all cut our way safely through and got back to the column. Several men and horses were wounded but that was all. Captain Armstrong was a fine, gallant man, liked by every man in his squadron.

A heavy, well-directed fire was now poured into the enemy, who were reinforced by another body. They charged down the road in a solid mass with great éclat, but our rifle fire and case shot from the fifteen-pounder caused them to halt and seek cover in the long grass. Then they came on again, this time led by a giant whirling a huge battle-axe aloft, as he leaped towards us. He was a man of really gigantic stature even for a Zulu, adorned with fantastic decorations of flowing cow-tails and long crane's feathers. Once more our heavy fire from all ranks roused the rebels to go back and make for the rear of the store.

Again the enemy got reinforcements, and again they charged the column. This charge was helped by a flank charge at the same time, but both were repulsed. Now Major Campbell formed his men in a deep crescent across the road, the fifteen-pounder facing up the road and the Natal District Mounted Rifles guarding his rear.

Now a third impi about seven hundred strong joined them and things were beginning to look serious. Twice again they charged, but such execution was done with "case" by the fifteen-pounder, and the fire of the Rexer guns that they finally retreated. These rebel forces were men of the Matshwili and Ntshing-umuzi tribes with an induna named Mahlanga in command.

The enemy left one hundred and forty killed on the ground, but took their wounded with them. Major Campbell (a doctor in private life) had four men killed and several slightly wounded. Every native

driver and voorlooper had cleared out, and Major Campbell had the greatest difficulty in getting his column to Thring's Post.

About the same date a very pretty little action was fought at Ponjwana. I was with MacKay's column, which was the pivot force on a twenty-mile front, engaged in an encircling movement. This small column, when on the march, spotted a large force of rebels on a ridge at Sikota's kraal.

The advance guard sent back word to the column and the main body closed up to within two hundred yards of its advanced force. The country here, on either side of the road, is steep and covered with thorn bush, and at this particular place on the right of the road it is precipitous and covered with very thick bush. The column was advancing down the road, was nearly opposite this place and had become a little jammed and too close for either comfort or quick action.

At this moment the advance guard was attacked and fell back on the main body, which immediately lined across the road. Fire was at once opened on the swiftly charging enemy with their waving assegais. Some of the advanced guard, still mounted, fired from their saddles at the on-coming mass.

All were ordered to dismount, turn their mounts over to the horse holders. Throwing themselves flat on the ground, they opened a hot, rapid and accurate fire.

The enemy charge was made with the utmost celerity and courage—marvellous courage—for the nearest men actually fell almost touching the rifle

To Mopumulo

Sikotas  
Kreal

①

②

Transvaal Mid Rifles

Natal Field

Artillery

1 where ...

2 Scouts

③

Boundary of ...

Scale  
Roughly 0 to 1 mile

To ...

PONJWANA

muzzles, whilst the centre of the rush was literally blown to pieces by the accurate shooting of the marksmen of this particular force; most of whom hunted for their living for at least half the year.

The two bodies of the charging enemy swerved to either side of the line of fire. Those moving off to the right flank, passed between that flank and several deserted huts, doing so just as C Squadron came up closing that gap and thus coming under a raking fire.

A friend of mine said to me some days after:

"One could not help but admire their leaders. On those officers of theirs would come. Ten, fifteen and twenty yards ahead of their men. They were splendid. But how our chaps dropped them!"

Another said to me:

"I saw one ringed man fall, get up again with blood streaming from him and come on. Again he went down with another bullet and then he *crawled towards us on his hands and knees.*"

Colonel Mackay now got word from a friendly native that at the kraal of Mtandeni a force of two impis—more than seven thousand men—was being formed to attack Barker, that a white man had been captured and tortured before the whole of them by witch-doctors and his body horribly mutilated. Word of this was sent to Major-General Mackenzie, who sent a loyal native at once to Colonel Barker, warning him.

As Barker was twenty miles away as the crow flies, and the country was exceedingly rough and broken, this would take some time. Actually, Nkantolo—the despatch carrier—going by a very roundabout way,

covered a distance of fifty-four miles in twenty-eight hours on foot, crossing very hilly country, broken with deep kloofs, covered with thick forest and bush. This will give some idea of how Zulus can travel.

The body of the poor white man who had been tortured was found the next day at the kraal of Meseni. It was most horribly mutilated. It had been ripped open and all the intestines, lungs, heart, liver and other parts taken out. The soles of the feet had been burnt to cinders. The head had been cut off, and was never found, so it was never known who the man was. It was always supposed that it was the body of Edward Veal, of the Public Works Department.

Whoever he was, there is not the least doubt that Meseni was cognizant of the capture and torture. With such instances as these—there were many of them—can it be wondered at that many of the Zulu wounded were shot where they lay? Meseni's kraal was burnt to the ground.

This will tend to show the risks which scouts or despatch riders ran, more especially settlers living in out-of-the-way parts.

One instance I shall never forget, of what I thought the acme of pure pluck. It was after the fight near Thring's Post and I was riding with despatches into Kearney from where another man was to take them to railhead at Stanger.

I had been given strict orders to turn back any civilians whom I might meet and tell them that it was certain death to go on, as the country was teeming with rebels. I saw a Scotch cart coming towards me,



about five miles from Kearney. There were two mules in it, the only occupant was an old Scotch woman of about fifty-five. There she sat, with a double-barrelled shot-gun across her lap. I gave her my message. Her reply, in a slow but very determined voice, was something like this:

"Young man, your general may have given you those orders. Well! laddie, you've given them to me. But I have lived amongst these people all my life and know them. No Zulu or fifty Zulus are going to turn back Mrs. MacTavish, while she has got a gun and is able to use it. Don't you bother yourself."

She whipped up her mules before I could reply and off she went. I learnt afterwards that she actually drove twenty miles through rebel country and was never molested.

Scouting was really very risky work. No matter whether you were one of a scouting party or scouting on your own the risk was about the same. It was not so much that one dreaded being scuppered, it was the—of course I am talking for myself—awful funk of what would be done to one before death.

I can honestly say that I hardly ever went out scouting—and I did a lot of it—without getting very windy.

A converging movement was now being made from all directions surrounding the area with columns under Barker, Leuchars, Wools-Sampson and General Mackenzie.

Barker, after the fight just alluded to at Ponjwana, moved to the Umvoti Drift. Mackay's and Leuchar's

columns were already close to it and the next day these two joined forces with Wools-Sampson. During the previous five days it was estimated that eight hundred and fourteen rebels had been killed.

On July 24th, General Mackenzie swept up the Umvoti valley, Leuchars being on the left, Mackay in the centre and Wools-Sampson on Mackay's right. Seven thousand to ten thousand natives were in the area, yet owing to the difficult terrain, they could not be brought to battle. Many were killed in skirmishes, and 2,000 cattle captured.

Mackenzie started another drive, but by this time, the rebels had been joined by another impi of Matshwili, a force of 2,000 men

Mackenzie finally rounded up half the rebels at Izinsimba. Here, in a running fight, seven hundred and twenty four rebels were killed, and amongst those on the ground with the killed were Matshwili, his son, his chief induna named Dabulumbimbi; and Mahlonga, a native Christian preacher, fully armed and with a Bible in one pocket and prayer-book in another.

The hammering blows at Mome, Umvoti, Insuze, Peyana and Thring's Post, all in quick succession, all resulting in heavy losses in men and cattle and kraals being burned, broke the spirit of the rebels.

Now, Mackenzie went after Ndhlovu's district. This was the chief who had allowed and taken part in the murder of Sangreid and Robbins, Knox and the trooper; looted Thring's Post and Otimati, taken several herds of cattle and killed several of the N.M.R. from ambush.

These rebels were rounded up in a dense forest and suffered heavy losses, but Meseni and Ndhlovu broke through the cordon at night, with a few followers and got into Zululand. A loyal chief named Hatshi surrounded them in the great Entumeni forest and brought them all in under arrest to Eschowe, whence they were forwarded to General Mackenzie's H.Q. at Mapumulo, reaching there on July 28th.

It was now hoped that the Rebellion would end. Notices were posted saying that mercy would be shown to all coming in and surrendering. Colonel Barker reckoned that between July 4th and 28th he killed eighty-seven. In addition he captured 375; took more than 1,500 head of cattle, 3,000 head of small stock and twenty horses and mules. On July 19th, Macabacaba, chief induna to Meseni and the man directly responsible for the unknown white's torture, was captured on the banks of the Umhlatuze river.

Courts-martial were held at different centres, the first trial being of old Singananda followed by that of other chiefs. In most cases the death sentence was passed and then commuted by the Governor. Meseni and Ndhlovu were both convicted of high treason. Twenty-five prisoners were given long sentences and deported to St. Helena. Most got off lightly, with additional doses of the cat. In all 4,500 prisoners received sentences.

A rough estimate of the rebels gives the number in the field at any one time as 18,000, of whom 3,700 were killed. Of course a large number of the Zulu dead were never found. It must also be remembered,

that all did not rise at the same time, and that very many of those killed were taken away and buried before we could count them.

The total cost of the campaign, on military expenditure, was just under £1,000,000, a remarkably small sum; by the consent of His Majesty, a medal was granted, with, in some cases, a clasp, inscribed "1906".

On August 28th, an order was issued for all reserves, emergency corps and loyal levies, to be immediately disbanded.

On July 23rd, an old, old fighting man, a captain in the Zulu army under the great Tschaka, an induna under Dingaan and an impi commander at Isandhlwana for his King, Cetewayo, passed away.

I had twice been allowed to go into his cell and talk with this great old warrior, who was in full possession of all his senses and whose mind was as clear as the average man's of thirty or forty, clearer in some respects. This man was the old chief Singananda. He always declared, both at his trial and after, that he was ordered, nay, forced, to rebel by Dinizulu. "He is the last of the Royal House which I have always served and obeyed," said the old induna.

Poor old fellow, he was one hundred and six when he was sentenced to the nominal imprisonment of thirty days. During this time he was given every comfort and attention that could be thought of, but at his age he was unable to adapt himself to the new conditions of life.

He was always cheerful and very talkative; remarkably shrewd and clever in his remarks. On some

occasions he would tell of his wonderful past experiences, such as the terrible massacre of the Boers with their leader Pict Retief in 1838, at the place called Mgungundhlovu. Here Singananda took part as a captain of one of the King's favourite impis.

The impish, really fiendish delight with which the old fighting induna told of his King's triumph, secured as it was by the vilest treachery and accompanied by devilish acts to the women, showed a lurid side of the Zulu character when dealing with an enemy who is at his mercy.

But the great outstanding virtue of the old warrior was his superb bravery as a fighter and his dog-like devotion to the Zulu Royal House. What the rebels lacked was one really great leader, one great Zulu commander of the type of Tschaka or Mose-li-katze.

Such a man as either of these, with his headquarters at one central point in the rebel territory, could have controlled his forces at Mome, Umsingu, Mapumulo, and Ndwedwe. The Zulus remembered the great victories of the Mighty Tschaka, but not how he obtained them. Dinizulu's presence was needed out in the open as a leader, as a last representative of the Royal House, as a rallying name for all the tribes.

Had he come out and risked all, there is not the slightest doubt but that seventy-five per cent of the Zulus in Natal and nearly every Zulu in Zululand, would have flown to arms and started to rally round the Royal Headquarters.

In no single instance did the rebels really employ the

tactics which had made their forebears invincible, namely an attack in the open with the converging and encircling horns; the method which was proved so successful at Isandhlwana in 1879.

Credit must be given to the Nonqai (native police) who in almost every instance remained loyal; more than that, of the many thousands who had passed through this fine corps, only one man—he had left the corps thirty years before—joined the rebels.

The part taken by the Christian natives—so-called—was a bad and prominent one. The teachings of the native preachers was generally that of the Ethiopians, seditious, and a hotch-potch of Christianity, plus witch-doctoring. Many of these served with the rebels and were present at some of the revolting things done to captured whites.

In July, 1907, it was found that of the native prisoners in the Natal jails, four hundred and sixty-eight were professed Christians, of this number half had been convicted for Rebellion and half for criminal acts of other kinds. Seventeen were so-called preachers. In addition to these figures must be added the preachers shot, and the many members of different denominations—some with titles of twenty words—who suffered the same way. Hunt and Armstrong were both murdered by Mission boys.

An inquiry was held into Dinizulu's conduct in August. He visited Government House and saw the Governor, in the presence of his Ministers. Here he was given a straight talking-to, without words being minced, but little did the Governor and Ministers

know that he had committed several serious acts of high treason.

In 1907, Dinizulu's name was mixed up with the murder of two loyal chiefs, Nsasa and Sitshitshili. This caused many loyal chiefs to send word that "these murders were inspired from Dinizulu's kraal . . . our lives as loyal chiefs are not safe . . . Dinizulu is responsible."

About this time, Bambata's chief wife escaped from Dinizulu, who had held her prisoner for months, and she now stated that:

"Bambata, Dinizulu and his two chief impi commanders had several meetings in Dinizulu's hut. Here Bambata was treated as a great induna." On another occasion she heard Dinizulu tell Bambata, "to go and start the great fight and the Lion of the Royal House would join at the right moment." That Dinizulu twice gave Bambata rifles and ammunition. She also stated that Dinizulu had many guns not registered. That Dinizulu had several loyal men killed in his presence.

A warrant was now issued for his arrest, charging him with high treason and conspiracy. Dinizulu arrived at the Nongoma jail on a night when it was pelting with a cold, icy rain. He was tried at Pietermaritzburg, where he was accused of high treason, public violence, rebellion and murder. His friends secured for him one of the leading lawyers in South Africa, the Hon. W. Schreiner, K.C. He was found guilty on all counts except murder, and was let off with the light sentence of four years' hard labour.

He was released from prison when the Union of South Africa was formed and taken to a farm in the Transvaal, his pay of £500 a year being allowed him as long as he did not leave a certain district.

This campaign was the first instance in the history of the British Empire, where a Colony had fought such a war, without the assistance of the Mother Country; calling as it did for the employment of 12,000 men in all, and 8,000 native levies.

General Mackenzie's methods were to strike, strike hard, rapidly, and to keep on striking, allowing the rebels no rest or time to concentrate in overwhelming bodies. He was a splendid man to serve under.

This rebellion has been dealt with at some length in the hope that it will convey to the reader what really occurred, and how the people of Natal felt about it.

A very large number of people in England—especially while the fighting was taking place—were swayed by many false and lying charges of unfairness, brutality, chicanery and other accusations against the people of Natal. This made some, including a few noisy members of the House of Commons, come to the conclusion that the Rebellion had been forced on the Zulus with some ulterior motive. This was most emphatically unfair to the people of Natal, ninety per cent of whom were settlers of pure British stock, and remarkably good stock at that.

The clash in 1906 arose—as I have seen it arise elsewhere amongst primitive people—through an



attempt to impose civilization on peoples who are not ready for it, and who do not want it. So far from the Rebellion being at an end, it has only just started. Look at the trouble in Barotseland, Northern Rhodesia and Kenya since. The root of the evil is still there. The canker, or what the Zulu would term 'nomtebe or unomtebe, is still existing. This means that a country that has once been in disorder, has only been superficially quietened but "the ants are still working below the surface."

There is still intense dissatisfaction with European rule—not only British—Ethiopianism is still alive, very much so, in *All Africa* to-day, and is fostered by all native churches, of whatever denomination.

What it amounts to is this: the native, in any part of the world, resents the petty restrictions that are forced on him by an alien race, who do not understand his ways of thinking, this, be he Eskimo, Zulu, Maya, Yaqui or Siwash.

In the Zulus, you have a truly noble race of savages, one of the finest I have met in any of my travels, all over the world. They are savages, nothing will make them any different, but they are splendid savages. A people very susceptible to right treatment by men who know and understand them. The utter collapse of their great tribes and tribal mode of government is a tragedy, and a great one at that. If it is allowed to go on, there will be another Rebellion—equally futile—and probably joined in by other great tribes such as the Basutos.

My travels through many uncivilized countries and

my life amongst savage and uncivilized races has convinced me that the methods used by all white governing races towards them are wrong, quite wrong.

The position of the Zulus and others is worthy of much study and close attention; this from many points. Their old customs are fast dying out, their modes of living are being altered, and this often means that their very life blood is being drained from them. The savage cannot face the civilized life, its ways and manners. I have seen this in the tropics and in the Arctic. The very mildest of white illnesses will wipe out whole areas. I have known hundreds of an Arctic people die from mumps; hundreds of Indian tribes die from measles.

And so to end this episode in my travels. This last native war in South Africa through which I served, may be of the greatest significance, for in my opinion, it is a good example of the strange, but nevertheless true statement that "the lower races disappear before the higher, through the mere effects of contact", and the methods used in South Africa are but those used to all the lower races in all parts of the world.

## CHAPTER TWENTY

GO where you will in Africa ; still will you hear the call of the drum, that tap, tap, tap ; now changing into a quick boom, boom, boom. No matter whether you are on the veldt, in jungle, bush or desert, always you will hear at some time or another the beat of the drum, calling from village to village or kraal to kraal, incessant, and to the white man, nerve-wracking.

As I have said already, there is that true saying that : "When the drums play in Zanzibar, all Africa, even to the Lakes, listens."

To the white man, this drumming is always a mystery and will always remain one. How can anyone account for the fact that the natives in South Africa knew of a big white man's victory over black men—the battle of Omdurman—weeks before it was known in most civilized parts of Africa ? How account for the fact that the surrender of Jameson and his men at Krugersdorp to the Boers, was known to the natives in Cape Colony before even the telegraph had sent the news, or that many times during the Boer War natives told commanders of columns news which they had been unable to get from their helios.

The bush telegraph, as it is called, has been working

for thousands of years and all the laughing and sneering of scientists will not do away with the facts. The death of the Great White Queen was flashed from one end of Africa to the other by it; it was in existence and just as efficient, long before the white man ever thought of short waves. Still it is always the personal experience that counts, so here goes.

When scouting in the Boer War with Driscoll's Scouts, a Basuto boy of mine gave me news—which I did not believe—of the death of Queen Victoria, at De Aar Junction; it was about five in the afternoon. I was at the small railway station that night and asked the telegraphist on duty, if he had any news of the event. He told me that he had not. We did not get the news officially until twelve o'clock midday the next day.

We sneer at witch-doctors yet they are not all charlatans and I have had proof of this also.

I had an old witch-doctor, "throw the bones" for me (tell my fortune by knuckle-bones); this was in Zululand. Later on I had another of them tell my fortune in Matabeleland, this time it was a very old Makalaka; almost word for word they said the same thing and this was what it was: "'Nkose, you will travel much. Much you will travel and never rest. You will see many fights, and always you will go to fights; but your snake (ghost) will watch over you, and you will die peacefully, a very old man." I have lived and travelled all over the world, mostly in out-of-the-way places and though I have been in action many times in many countries I have never had a

scratch. Also I am nearly three score years and ten.

In many countries I have had the gold fever, and been in at most of the gold rushes for the last fifty years, but funnily enough never had the diamond fever. But what a fever it is, the average diamond fossicker and the desert rat of the Western American deserts are twin brothers. When the diamond fever gets a man properly, he will never stop his endless quest, only with death. Three times I have known men who have made good-sized fortunes from diamond finds and each time they have continued at the eternal search and died in the deserts.

One man I knew made a good find in the early days at Kimberley, sold-out for £15,000 and returned to England. Came back again and made another find in the Vaal diggings, went home again and came out a third time to perish in the German East African fields in 1908 when the seaport town of Ludheritzburg was as wild as any Yankee mining town.

Illicit diamond buying was bad in the old Kimberley days, but the more recent finds in Namqualand have made it as nothing. The western desert coast is closed, according to the Union of South Africa laws, to all diamond prospectors, but this stretch of coast is the richest diamond territory which has ever been found and despite the Police Camel Patrols, dozens of men risk their lives by getting in, most leaving their bones in that waterless region.

A tantalizing mystery is here, from where do these diamonds come, for up to now no pipe of blue clay has

been found, as in the Kimberley area, and in no instance are the diamonds found at any great distance from the seashore. A friend of mine, an ex-trooper of the South African Constabulary, went to the Pomona fields and in less than four weeks had a bag of diamonds which he eventually sold for £22,000. Like all the men who have got rich suddenly—at least all I have known—he was convinced he could go back and get more. In a year he was broke. He went into German East territory again and that was the last that was ever heard of him.

Treasure in Africa! Why, there is not a square mile of South Africa that has not some tale of treasure. Gold, diamonds or buried treasure dating from as recently as Paul Kruger's great gold treasure, back to the days of the ancient city of Zimbabwe and the time of the Queen of Sheba.

Off the coast of Pondoland lies the great East Indiaman, *Grosvenor*, which sank with all her passengers on her voyage home from India and with wealth aboard in bullion and jewels to the extent of £8,000,000. Oom Paul's treasure was reckoned to be over £2,000,000. The Seychelles Islands have the treasure of at least two pirates buried on them. In July, 1855, the great ship *Doddington*, belonging to the Old John Company, went ashore in Algoa Bay with treasure estimated to be worth £3,000,000.

Go to Mozambique, and you will not have been there for a week, before you will have heard of the Portuguese soldier who got back to the city only to

drop down dead and with his last breath try to tell of the great treasure he had found in the interior.

Speak to any elephant-hunter and you will not find one who does not believe in the elephant dying-ground, a secluded valley, hidden somewhere in the interior, for which all elephants make when they know that their time has come to die. If one white man has tried for this ivory treasure a hundred have.

Mysteries of Africa. What became of the dozen white women saved from the *Grosvenor*? At least this number were saved and taken by natives as wives. Three have been traced, and there is one tribe in the vicinity that has a distinct white strain in it. To what homes and perhaps titles are these descendants heirs? For there were several people of title aboard the *Grosvenor*.

What of the mysterious monkeys of Africa? Ever since I first put foot on the continent I have had natives tell me of instances of the great apes—old man baboons and such—capturing native women and mating with them. I am not a scientist and cannot prove by a lot of scientific arguments that it is not possible for these great apes to have children by native women, but I believe my own eyes and do know—as do many others who lived around Koomati Poort—of a woman with the face and head shaped exactly like those of a dog-faced ape. She was the child of a native woman who had been seized and taken away by apes when she was a child of twelve. This native

lived with the tribe of apes for four years; then escaped with her ape-faced child.

Watch any tribe of these big apes on the march or trek. Watch the old man chief and see how he handles his tribe and how they obey him. Watch any native women fetching water, working in their mealie patch or hoeing the ground and see how they will scuttle away or call for their men folks, when they see these ape tribes. They are not scientists, no, they know. The baboon is as nearly man as any of his species can be and a darn sight more intelligent than many a man.

The great baboons travel in tribes and are one of the few animals which are rapidly increasing, this in spite of the fact that every government has a price on their heads, for they do more damage than any other animal in Africa.

Now for some—of what people in Europe will call—the wildest tales. There is a general belief among many of those who have penetrated the great south-west desert, that a tribe exists there who are direct descendants of a prehistoric race, early man, still living as he has done for thousands of years. Not one, but five different men I have known, report having seen these people. All five were different types. Two were men who had received good educations but through wanderlust had joined police forces and knocked all over South Africa, another was an old transport-rider; the man who taught me the work. One was a doctor—or had been at one time and the last was an old dopper Boer. This last swore that this



race, which he called "verdomde wilde bosmannetjes" (damed wild little bushmen) were like no other race which he had ever seen. They were like bushmen, but *white* and they could go for weeks without water.

This brings me to another similar rumour but now relating to the survival of prehistoric monsters.

That great South African hunter—one of the finest South Africa ever had and a man who never said much about his wonderful experiences, Mr. E. F. Grobler, told a tale in Cape Town in July of 1932—it was reported at the time in all the Cape Town papers—of seeing what "I think was a member of the dinosaur family. Its weight would be over four tons." This was said to be in the swamps of Portuguese West Africa. It was called by the natives the *chee-pee-kwee* and was said by the natives to kill and devour elephants.

The British Museum, the Smithsonian Museum of Washington and a German Expedition, have all in the last few years found remains of gigantic lizards with their skeletons in excellent state of preservation and in two instances with flesh still on some of the bones.

I do not suppose that there is a white man—certainly not a native—in all Rhodesia who has not heard of—and many claim to have seen the gigantic "Nandi bear". Fred Selous, whom I knew so well and who was one of the most noted and most conservative hunters and guides in his day, always assured me that

he had twice seen this animal. The universal belief amongst whites and natives is that this ferocious beast can climb trees and only comes out on its hunting expeditions at the dead of night.

This beast is, from all reports, a mixture of hyena, bear and leopard. Remember that it is only a very short time back that all laughed at the notion of such a freak as the okapi. The quagga has only been known since 1860, and the white rhino was a joke for years and years. Even now it is only found in very few places and will again soon be only a myth.

Myths, legends, tales of the fabulous; how many things there are all over Africa which lend themselves to myths. The lost cities of Rhodesia; Zimbawe, the greatest riddle of them all; said by men like Dr. P. Nazaroff, Dr. Karl Peters and others to be of Chaldean or Phœnician origin; by others like Miss Caton-Thompson and Professor Frobenius to be either Sabeian or Egyptian, while others say that it was an outpost of the Persian Empire of the time of Darius.

Great mining engineers state that there is not the slightest doubt that gold to over £100,000,000 was taken out of the country long before the whites ever heard of it. Far to the north of Zimbawe is another deserted and ruined city. One greater and more splendid than Zimbawe, with great walls of brick and with huge dungeons, but of this nothing is known.

And so after all I come back to the most fascinating form of travel there is in the world, the trek-waggon

of Africa, the real ship of the veldt. Far away from it, sitting at my typewriter, I hear again the call of the driver in the morning as he starts the span off, with a long-drawn, melodious cry of "Trek Yow."

The waggon of the voortrekkers was on the old Transvaal coins and stamps, and should adorn the coat-of-arms of the Union of South Africa. Those travelling ships of the land were used by explorers, pioneers and the old dopper Boer; used as a means of transport, as a travelling home, as a travelling trade-store and as a fort to fight behind. For as I have tried to show, waggons in laager were not easily taken, even by the Zulus.

As long as there is the African continent, so long will the old pioneer waggon with its disselboom (single shaft), its voorkist (front box), its achterkist (rear box), jager-zakken (canvas bags), water-vaatjes and katel, this really a bed of reim strips, be used.

Sometimes we transport-riders were called "smouses" as a term of almost contempt; much as one would say: "Oh! he is one of those roaming fools who will never stay put." Well, we were proud of our calling, of our life, of our spans of oxen and of our waggons. How that life—now that I am old—is calling to me to-day in London. The motors rush by my window as I write, speed they may have but can they ever show me what the transport-rider's waggon has done; the veldt at night and the wild herds of game trekking to water or the rising of the morning mist around the laager and the charge of the impi.

A term almost of contempt! My Lord, how proud

## AFRICAN ODYSSEY

I should be if I could again say, in the words of the poet Fannin:

“The veldt is my home and the waggon’s my pride,  
The crack of my voerslag shall sound o’er the lea,  
I’m a *smouse*, I’m a *smouse*, and the trader is *free!*”

THE END